

# The Object Relations Technique

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*A projective method of personality  
assessment derived from theoretical  
constructs of psychotherapy, and  
linking interpersonal and perceptual  
approaches*

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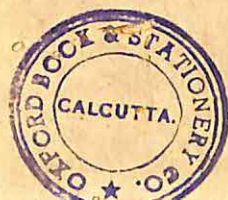
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*by*

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To

HENRY A. MURRAY

in gratitude for his inspiration  
and example  
in exploring personality.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE first ideas for this particular technique of personality investigation arose out of discussions in 1948 with Dr. H. Ezriel of the Tavistock Clinic and Miss P. H. M. King of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. Related ideas had been expressed by the late Dr. J. Rickman in papers, seminars, and informal discussions.

My indebtedness to Dr. H. Ezriel is very considerable: greater than can be acknowledged within the text. Not only have I drawn heavily upon the theoretical views expressed by him in his papers on group psychotherapy, but I have taken a great deal more in understanding from the opportunities he and Dr. J. D. Sutherland have given me to observe unconscious and conscious personality dynamics in action, over extended periods, where this method of therapy was being used. This experience and the discussion of it with the therapist concerned is responsible for a great many of the ideas which have accumulated around this Object Relations Test of personality.

My special thanks are due to Dr. J. D. Sutherland for many helpful discussions and for valuable suggestions and clarifications.

I have received a great deal of help and many insights from discussions with colleagues and students on the psychological staff of the Clinic during the time the test has been used experimentally. Mr. J. Boreham and Mr. G. Staunton have gained considerable experience with the technique and have made many suggestions which are incorporated in the theoretical statement and in the first sample of normative data. I am very much indebted to Mr. J. Boreham for the fourth and fifth of the shorter case studies in Chapter IIIB and to Mrs. E. O'Kelly for the sixth of these studies. Mrs. O'Kelly has also provided a summary of normative data from the responses of forty adolescent girls used as a control group in her study of delinquent girls.



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The pictures for the test were drawn by Miss Elizabeth Carlisle and Madame Olga Dormondie, to whom I am extremely grateful for their excellent work and invaluable suggestions, as well as for their patience in undertaking the many drafts and revisions which were necessary. Two of the pictures (C<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>3</sub>) are adaptations of Madame Dormondie's illustrations for the 1947 limited edition of Vercors' *La Silence de la Mer*.

The description of unconscious dynamics and the development of concepts which may typify such processes inevitably lead to difficulties in communication, particularly with colleagues who have little or no first hand experience of psychotherapy. Every effort has been made to overcome this problem; any failure to do so may be ascribed in part to the nature and complexity of the phenomenon, but more specifically it is due to an incomplete understanding of it. What measure of success has been achieved in this endeavour comes in a very direct way from my work with patients, and I am humbly grateful to them for the privilege of sharing some of their intimate experiences.

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EVERY psychiatrist looks forward to the time when he will have available more precise instruments than the interview for assessing the forces underlying his patients' sufferings. Progress towards this end depends, of course, on our ability to isolate the important dynamic variables in psychological conflicts and to devise means of assessing these.

Perhaps the outstanding feature of the present situation in this field is the relative absence of adequate joint endeavours by the psychotherapist and the clinical psychologist. When the psychologist works alone, the result is too often a test in which it is painfully clear to the psychotherapist that its creator has had little or no dealings with the forces underlying psychological conflict. On the other hand, those powerful instruments that have emerged from the psychotherapist's experience, Jung's Word Association Test, Rorschach's method and Murray's Thematic Apperception Test, have not been developed in such a way that both psychotherapist and psychologist can feel satisfied about the quantitative as well as the qualitative possibilities.

My medical and psychological colleagues in the Tavistock Clinic share with me the view that only when the concepts required by the psychotherapist are integrated with the skills of the psychologist, will we be likely to achieve useful psychodiagnostic test methods, i.e. those which will force the therapist to sharpen his concepts and which will enable these to be tested progressively against the findings as treatment proceeds.

For our psychotherapeutic work, we have found the most satisfactory theoretical basis in the psycho-analytic theories of unconscious object relations, especially as these have been developed in England by Mrs. Klein and her school, and by Fairbairn. This approach to the personality seeks to explain its main features and conflicts in terms of the individual's needs to



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impose on the people and things of his external world various unconscious relationships between himself and the figures of his inner world—relationships which have grown from his earliest experiences. The constructs of the psycho-analyst are notoriously difficult, however, for the psychologist to assimilate and use in test construction—largely because he is so often denied access to the fundamental data of the therapeutic relationships. Apart from any merits Mr. Phillipson's test may prove to have as a means of investigating the individual's make-up, this description of his work will demonstrate the degree to which the psychologist and the psychotherapist can collaborate in sharing experiences and skills. The development of group psychotherapy has been an invaluable means to this end, and Mr. Phillipson's patience in observing over several years the interaction between patients and therapist has been a model on the part of the scientific worker seeking to get first-hand experience of the constructs the therapist uses. There is little doubt in my mind, too, that the developments in psychodiagnostic methods such as he reports cannot but succeed in helping the therapist towards greater precision in his concepts and hence in his clinical assessments.

This test, like all those based on the projective method, offers no substitute to the psychologist or the psychiatrist for the patient accumulation of experience of unconscious dynamics that is necessary for productive work in the study of personality. For those psychologists and psychiatrists who are prepared to acquire this basic experience, I believe it will prove a major acquisition in their clinical and research work.

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*July, 1954*



## Chapter One

### THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE TECHNIQUE

IN clinical practice in particular, but also in social and cultural research studies on interpersonal and inter-group relationships, there is an increasing use being made of projective techniques as one method of investigating personality dynamics. The wide use of these techniques springs from a general awareness of the importance of understanding the interplay of unconscious motives and more conscious strivings, the resultants of which are seen in overt behaviour. For purposes of research these techniques provide samples of personality interaction with standard stimuli which can be compared with those of other individuals and groups, and which are also capable of independent assessment.

The usefulness of projective methods is limited, however, in clinical practice and in research by the inadequacy of their theoretical rationale. Rorschach (1921) while stating clearly the empirical nature of his findings showed his awareness of the importance of developing a theoretical basis for his method. Murray (1937) provided the Thematic Apperception Test with a background of discussion on the nature and function of phantasy, and attempted (1938) to bring together concepts from many theories of personality into a system which could characterize personality dynamics revealed in T.A.T. responses, interview material, and other clinical data. In addition there have been a number of valuable contributions to the theory of projective methods from experimental work done outside the main stream of development of these techniques, for example by Griffiths (1935) who demonstrated

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the problem-solving function of phantasy, by M. D. Vernon (1940) who investigated the relation of cognition and phantasy in children, and more recently in the field of perception by Bruner and Postman (1951) and many others.

Many writers on projective techniques, notably Rickers-Osviankina (1943), Macfarlane (1941), Hertz (1951), and Rapaport (1946) have drawn together the many contributions to projective theory and stressed the need to provide a fuller and more precise rationale for the individual techniques. The knowledge accumulated through the empirical use of the tests is now considerable, but there has not been a parallel development of a body of theory which explains the process of "projection" and the different aspects and levels of behaviour shown by subjects responding to the particular test stimuli. It is likely that most clinical psychologists, while supporting the usefulness of projection tests in practice, will agree in general with criticisms expressed by Rapaport in a recent paper (1952). He states that theories relating to the various projection techniques "have hardly more in common than vague references to psycho-analytic ideas—but even from among these ideas the different test theories choose different ones." While he agrees that some of the tests may claim to have some body of theory, he makes the point that it is widely different as between the several tests and that it is fragmentary, consisting of unrelated concepts from different theories of personality which lend themselves to explanation of the various modes of behaviour the individual tests tend to emphasize.

But such criticisms, and the problems involved in their answer, relate not only to projective techniques. They are equally the concern of all workers dealing with therapy or research where the task is to understand personality adjustment, or maladjustment, in terms of the underlying dynamics as well as the more conscious aspects of behaviour. In a discussion relating to research work on group psychotherapy Freedman *et al.* (1951) point out that "current conceptual systems in psychology usually emphasize only one of several areas of personality or type of datum,<sup>1</sup> e.g. manifest or behaviour traits, central urges, psychodiagnostic categories,

<sup>1</sup> As an example, from among present concepts, they ask how do Murray's needs, Allport's traits, Rorschach's determinants relate to one another.



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etc., and relationships among different areas and levels are imperfectly dealt with, if at all."

The development of concepts for a unified theory of personality which can be used to describe and explain behaviour in varying situations, in all its aspects and at all levels is a task which will occupy psychologists for a considerable time. Nevertheless it does seem that there is now sufficient dynamic viewpoint common to the main areas of psychological research, e.g. the psychology of perception, the psychology of learning, clinical psychology, and psycho-analysis, for the psychologist to feel that concepts in use are closely related.

There is, for example, a striking similarity of language and concept used by Frank in discussing the process of "projection" as related to projective methods of investigating personality, and by Bruner in describing the process of perception. Frank (1948) describes personality as "a unique way of organizing and interpreting all experience, of creating and maintaining a symbolic world of meanings and values, of assumptions and expectations that the individual must impose upon all situations, events and people——." Bruner (op. cit.) describes the process of perception in terms of a three-step cycle which involves (a) an expectancy or hypothesis "we do not see—we look for", i.e. perceiving takes place in a tuned organism, (b) an information input from the environment, and (c) a checking or confirmation procedure, i.e. input information is confirmatory to or congruent with the operative hypothesis, or it is in varying degrees infirming or incongruous: the cycle continues until confirmation occurs.

Both writers clearly recognize the interdependence of the dynamics of personality and of perception, but these constructs and similar ones, e.g. the "dynamic systems" as described by Krech (1949) and others, are in themselves too general. They require some specification of the reference points and relationships to be used in describing the dynamic structure and organizing principles of personality, and the process by which they are revealed in a particular stimulus situation. The question arises whether it is possible to develop concepts which will characterize these "expectations" and "hypotheses" taking account of both conscious



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and unconscious dynamics and in the same terms describing, for example, overt behaviour, mode of perception and the distinctive features of what is produced by an individual's activity in a given situation.

The direction of thinking in psychology has turned decisively towards the study of processes and, in recent years, there has been a growing recognition that the basic psychological processes to be studied are those involving personal relationships. Bruner, who has discussed the relevance of his experimental work on perception to Rorschach theory (1948), seems to be moving towards the point of view (1951) that the development of an adequate theory of perception can be derived only from understanding what the perceptual field means to the subject in terms of personal relationships. He writes, "It seems to me that the most basic point to be made is this: if we wish to work on personality factors in perceiving, then we must concentrate upon the investigation of those environmental cues which are appropriate to the confirmation of hypotheses which reflect basic personality patterns. By and large, these environmental cues are not size cues or colour cues or brightness cues. They are cues which aid more directly in our interpersonal adjustment: the apparent warmth or coldness of people, the apparent threateningness of a situation, the apparent intelligence or apparent sincerity of others."

Bruner's conclusions are very near to those of Lewin (1935), according to whose dynamic theory personality can be understood only if it is viewed in relation to the field in which it operates. The psychological field is determined primarily by social rather than by physical factors, for from the beginning of life the field has been given structure and meaning in a very basic way by experience of relations with other people, for example in terms of gratification and frustration, of control and freedom, approval and disapproval, and by example. What is really relevant in determining behaviour, according to Lewin, is not what is objectively there but what is perceived in the psychological field, and what the individual selectively pays attention to in a particular situation depends upon "tense psychological systems", characterized in some way by past experience of relations with people.

This conclusion, that the process of perception is primarily



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determined by, and therefore understandable in terms of personal relationships, implies that it should be possible to develop concepts in these terms to characterize, for example, an individual's perception and interpretation of a social situation, a T.A.T. picture, or a Rorschach ink blot. Equally the different aspects of behaviour revealed in a subject coming to terms with these stimuli, e.g. the formal characteristics of what he produces, the mode of perception, the content and sequence at manifest and at deeper levels, should be capable of description in the same frame of reference.

The similarity between these theoretical positions and the viewpoint which has traditionally guided psychotherapeutic work is clear. But perhaps the primacy of interpersonal relations in any description of personality dynamics has been taken to be too obvious a premise upon which to build a theory of personality. Recently, however, workers in clinical psychology, both medical and non-medical, seem to be re-examining this possibility. For example, Freedman *et al.* (op. cit.), in discussing the requirements for a theoretical system which will take account of the total personality, put particular emphasis on the point that each variable should possess systematic interpersonal reference, i.e. that it should relate to interpersonal processes taking place between two or more people. Similarly, Harris (1950), reporting efforts to develop concepts which will fit therapeutic work as well as behaviour in psychodiagnostic tests, concludes that the main problem is to define a language of social interaction; to find variables which describe the social effects of behaviour and the cues which are responded to in social situations: he concludes that "this is essentially the problem of molar behaviourism: what is the patient really doing?"

But for any full understanding of the way in which the perception of personal relations influences the development of personality and consequently the behaviour of an individual in any given situation, account must be taken of unconscious as well as conscious dynamics. This is of particular importance in the use of projective methods. From their earliest use these methods have been designed to obtain information about deeper conflicts and strivings which cannot be revealed by the subject in face to face



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discussion. The creators of the better known techniques, the Word Association Test, Rorschach and Thematic Apperception Test were each medical psychologists. Jung and Murray clearly related their techniques to their practice in therapy which was a psycho-analytic approach, while Rorschach's posthumous paper (1924) shows that he too was aware of the relevance of psycho-analytic ideas to the development of his diagnostic method. Subsequently considerable attention has been given to the contribution of psycho-analytic thought to the development of projective techniques, but there has been no attempt to provide a rationale, including a systematic statement of concepts, which describe the unconscious dynamics which the "tests" are designed to reveal.

The development of concepts which can be used to describe unconscious phenomena is, by the nature of the material, a most difficult task. Traditionally the method of psycho-analytic investigation does not permit independent observation of the phenomena. The exclusive use of a two-person relationship has tended to emphasize the isolation of this area of psychological knowledge from the main stream of thought and experimentation. It has resulted in the growth of a large body of knowledge and experience which is described in language and concepts that are peculiarly relevant to the therapeutic process in a two-person transference relationship.

In such a situation the balance of emphasis is upon phantasy relationships, as compared with everyday life situations in which reality contents predominate. For this reason perhaps the extension of psycho-analytic concepts to characterize human relationships in situations other than the traditional therapeutic one produces many uncertainties, and the connections between unconscious dynamics and overt behaviour appear to be still obscure and somewhat nebulous. In addition, of course, the communication of psycho-analytic ideas to people who have no direct experience or training in the perception of unconscious processes has in the past presented insuperable difficulties—difficulties which are of the same order as those experienced by analysands in recognizing their unconscious needs and fears in terms of relations with their analyst. This problem of communication, intensified by the



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particular nature of the psycho-analytic experimental situation, has been central in preventing the integration of knowledge concerning unconscious and conscious dynamics into a more unified theory of personality.

Two recent developments in psychotherapy seem to be particularly relevant to the building up of such a theory. First, the development of the psycho-analytic theory of unconscious object relations, and secondly, its application to the understanding of behaviour in situations other than the traditional two-person therapeutic relationship.

The theory of unconscious object relations has been developed and elaborated notably by Klein (1948) and Fairbairn (1952) on the basis of psycho-analytic work with young children and collaborative, intensive, and long-term work with adults.<sup>1</sup> These analysts demonstrate that object relations exist within the personality as well as between the personality and the external world, and that the inner world of object relations determines in a fundamental way the individual's relations with people in the external world. This inner world of objects—more strictly object relations—is basically the residue of the individual's relations with people upon whom he was dependent for the satisfaction of primitive needs in infancy and during early stages of maturation. During these early periods of development the individual's relationships with essential objects, the breast and later the mother with the breast, is predominantly a phantasy relationship: there is little or no ability to differentiate between self and object, between what is inside and what is outside. The quality of the object relations is typified by the biological formulae of sucking to incorporate, and later, biting and eating to incorporate. The first simple techniques of maintaining a good relationship with the object by incorporating the "good" and rejecting the "bad" according to whether it is a satisfying or a frustrating object are differentiated *pari passu* with the development of the ego capacities of the individual. Dependent upon the degree of frustration

<sup>1</sup> This theory has been implicit in certain areas of psycho-analytic thought for many years; for example the theory of the super-ego postulates an internal object. Similarly in the work of some American analysts, for instance Sullivan (1945) and Horney (1946) the concepts used are close to those developed by British psychoanalysts.



and the success or failure of the techniques employed to relieve tension, these early phantasy relationships, and the processes used to regulate them, persist and condition the individual's subsequent relations with the external world in general and with people (i.e. objects) in particular. Although the genetic continuity of development of personality in these terms is not yet fully understood, the work of Klein, Fairbairn and other British analysts has thrown considerable light on the range and quality of early infantile object relations, at conscious and unconscious levels, and on how they are elaborated and modified by subsequent experience in the "Oedipal phases" and through the later transitional phases of development to puberty and maturity.<sup>1</sup>

The basis of this theory is stated by Guntrip (1952) in a paper in which he applies Fairbairn's theory to schizoid personality studies. He says, "The fundamental fact about human nature is our libidinal drive towards good object relationships. The key biological formula is the adaptation of the organism to the physical environment. The key psychological formula is the relation of the person to the human environment. The significance of human living lies in object relations, and only in such terms can our lives be said to have meaning—our needs, fears, frustrations, resentments, and anxieties in our inevitable quest for good objects are the real problem of psychopathology, because they are the real problem in everyday life." He goes on to say that this is not just a question of object relations at a conscious level but that "the real heart of the matter is a repressed world of internalized psychic objects, bad objects and bad object situations—it is bad objects which are internalized, because we cannot accept their badness and yet cannot give them up, cannot leave them alone, cannot master or control them in outer reality, and so keep on struggling to possess them, to alter them and change them into good objects in our inner reality." On the other hand when our primitive needs are satisfied by external experience the relationships involved are enjoyed and live on as memories, thereby

<sup>1</sup> For present purposes it is not thought necessary to present a more detailed account of the knowledge that has been accumulated on the basis of this psycho-analytic theory. For such accounts the reader may refer to the sources quoted.



forming the basis of reality-based relationships with people in later life, but, "the phantasies in which internal objects reveal their existence to consciousness are activities of the structures which constitute the internal object relations. In adult life, situations in outer reality are unconsciously interpreted in the light of these situations persisting in unconscious inner and purely psychic reality. We live in the outer world with emotions generated in the inner world."

Recent applications of the theory to describe behaviour outside the strictly two-person psycho-analytic situation illustrate its relevance to perception psychology and to projective methods. Money-Kyrle (1951) shows how repressed object relations with their imagery and impulses are the foundation of "beliefs and expectancies" which determine behaviour in adult life, and he points to the influence of these dynamic systems upon the learning process, for these "beliefs" are excluded from the test of consistency, both with each other and with subsequent real experience. These unconscious beliefs and images are shown to "function like percepts in that they express those expectations which make up a belief in the reality of an object perceived. The emotional response of anyone under the influence of what is called 'unconscious phantasy' is therefore the same as if the phantasy were part of the perceptual world."

How and in what terms these unconscious phantasies are superimposed upon a stimulus field is clarified by Ezriel (1950 and 1951), in his statements of the hypotheses he derives from object relations theory to describe what happens in a group when a strictly psycho-analytic method of therapy is adopted. The relations patients attempt to make one with another and with the therapist in a group are determined by their relations with unconscious phantasy objects. These relations are conceived to be dynamic systems which are the residues of unresolved infantile conflicts with people ("objects") upon whom the individual was dependent for the gratification of his biological needs at early stages of his development. In an attempt to find relief from the tensions which are the result of these unresolved conflicts, the individual transfers or superimposes these unconscious objects on the people in his present environment, for example, upon the



analyst and patients in the "here and now" of the group situation.<sup>1</sup> The making conscious of these transferred relationships by interpretation becomes the mainspring of the therapeutic process, and only when their nature, and the anxieties associated with them, have been fully exposed can more reality-based relations with the external world be built up.

The therapist and the members of the group represent the dominant features of the stimulus field, just as in the projection test interview the clinical psychologist and the T.A.T. pictures or Rorschach ink blots make up the projection screen. Ezriel (1950) has suggested, with illustrations from recorded group sessions, that the role-seeking and role-giving by individual members of a group represent the individual's attempts to resolve the common group tension, the "common denominator of the dominant unconscious phantasies of all members". He has suggested also that the role which each member of the group takes up will represent his method of dealing with the anxieties which are associated with this common group problem, e.g. anxieties that the therapist will not be able to maintain control if the dominant unconscious phantasies are acted out in the group, or that he may reject the group, or that the group, which is in reality the *sine qua non* of getting help (and also a source of security) will disintegrate.

These dynamic sequences are enacted in terms of a manifest content which varies in its apparent nearness to, or remoteness from, the actual group situation. Occasionally some accidental stimulus within the immediate situation is used by the group with a degree of elaboration which permits of a comparison with projection-test responses in somewhat more familiar context.

In one group session it happened that on a small blackboard in the room there were three bits of doodling of varying degrees of ambiguity. The first seemed clearly to be five lines with a musical note upon it, the second two parallel lines going horizontally.

<sup>1</sup> Actually, Ezriel extends this hypothesis to all behaviour (1950):—"Our behaviour is therefore not only governed by conscious needs and environmental demands, but also by unconscious needs . . . personality traits which find expression in the various ways in which different individuals try to fulfil the same conscious task, represent such attempts to diminish tensions arising from unconscious object relations, superimposed on whatever conscious task the individual may try to solve."



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with two others going off at an angle underneath; the third, some curved and angled lines which could be taken to represent parts of human figures. After about twenty minutes, during which there had been difficulty in finding any common theme, and many silences, a member of the group drew attention to these blackboard drawings, saying that he wondered what they all meant. Three or four other members immediately joined in, one saying that perhaps the room was used for some musical activity, another that perhaps it was used for teaching, and these were explanatory sketches for the pupil, and a third that it seemed to him that the lines at the bottom represented headless figures—it looked as if someone had been executed.

The common group theme here had to do with a wish to find out what happened in the room between the therapist and co-therapist when the group was not there. The selection of particular parts of the stimulus field, and the significance members attached to these, were clearly related to each individual's phantasies around this common theme. They were masking as well as giving expression to their unconscious wishes in respect of the two therapists in seeking to find out whether there was harmony, i.e. a good relationship between them, whether there was an aggressive relationship, or whether one of them was in a subordinate position as pupil.

In this particular group situation the members took up a common group problem which expressed the tension they all experienced arising from unconscious phantasies about the kind of relationship which existed between the two therapists. The group as a whole, and the members individually, projected the problem on to a stimulus field which happened, by accident, to be in the room at that particular time. The presence of the blackboard with work on it represented something that went on in the room when the group was not there. The degree of ambiguity in the stimulus field permitted the expression of the group need with sufficient anonymity—or remoteness from conscious face to face relationships with the objects upon whom the unconscious phantasies were transferred, i.e. the therapists. Each individual member of the group was thus able to use the stimulus, as a whole or in part, to represent a phantasy which would resolve the particular kind



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of tension he or she was experiencing in relation to the common group problem. For example, the group member who saw the stimulus as evidence of a teacher-pupil relationship between the therapists; was a woman who, in a previous session, expressed her phantasy need to put the co-therapist into a role which was inferior in its intellectual aspects to that of the other therapist, that is, to look upon him as someone who "did not count". By so doing she was able to avoid facing in reality anxieties arising from unconscious wishes to separate the parents and take the mother's place, for if the mother did not count, then there was no rivalry situation.

Group psychotherapy provides a particularly advantageous projection situation if we are attempting to study personality in terms of object relations theory, for the personality dynamics can be observed directly in terms of relations with the therapist and between members of the group, whereas with most projection tests they can be seen only in symbolic representation. This theoretical approach, together with the opportunities provided by group psychotherapy for clarifying concepts which describe the dynamics of interpersonal relations, offers many possibilities for enriching hypotheses relating to the construction and the use of projective techniques.

In this setting it is possible to study under controlled conditions the "basic personality patterns" which characterize Bruner's "hypotheses" or "expectancies" or Frank's "private worlds". According to Ezriel's formulation (op. cit.) it appears that in response to a given stimulus situation the processes of perception will follow the working through of a tension system which includes three interrelated processes:

- i. a phantasied relation with an object resulting from the frustration of an early biological need. This phantasied relation represents a primitive way of gratifying the need, of dealing with the frustrating object,

- ii. a phantasied relation in terms of the feared consequences of these aggressive wishes, for example fear of destroying the object, of being rejected by the object, or fear of retaliation by the object or allied object,

- iii. defensive object relations built up in order to avoid facing



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such consequences in reality. The dynamic function of these relationships is to deal with anxiety resulting from aggressive phantasy relationships described in (i) above. These defensive relationships are mediated by the individual's reality-based experience of people, i.e. his learned experience, as distinct from his unconscious beliefs and expectancies.

The result of this dynamic process in a given stimulus situation is manifest behaviour.

Stated more generally: in any sequence of behaviour in a given stimulus situation (e.g. specific social situation, a T.A.T. picture or Rorschach ink blot presentation) an individual will select from the perceptual field, and structure what he selects, to fit with unconscious object relationships which in early life were phantasied in order to satisfy a primitive need. At the same time he will characterize what he sees in terms of object relationships which have been built up in order to guard against the consequences he fears might result from his unconscious wishes. The individual will also attempt to obtain relief of such unconscious tension systems without violating the rules and logic imposed upon him by his conscious awareness of external reality. Here his intellectual abilities will be the chief mediators. But in any situation in which he is under the dominance of unconscious phantasy, intellectual and ego efficiency will be weakened, and tension will thereby be increased rather than controlled. On the other hand where the unconscious tension is relatively easily relieved by defensive efforts, a large measure of freedom and emotional resources are available for the individual to use in reality-based relations with the external world. In such circumstances the individual's relations with other people will be guided more by a realistic appraisal of, and tolerance for, the individuality of others. Similarities and differences will be perceived for what they are rather than in terms of cues inviting the satisfaction of a primitive need, or representing a frustration of such needed relations, or intensifying related anxieties.

On the basis of the theoretical views so far summarized it will be clear that every sample of behaviour will contain traces of all the three "phases" or processes of the tension system described above, and that in any sequence of behaviour in a given stimulus situation



the dominance of one or other "phase" may be evidenced in the effort to obtain relief of tension. This alternating dynamic sequence may be seen in the small context of the individual response, or in the larger context throughout a series of responses.

In everyday social situations the opportunities for conventional behaviour add to the effectiveness of defensive mechanisms so that traces of unconscious object relationships, which nevertheless contribute to the individuality of behaviour, tend to be obscured. An essential consideration in using a projection test situation, is to sample behaviour in which the offensive and defensive components at both conscious and unconscious levels are revealed more clearly. Traditionally the ambiguity of the stimulus material, as in the therapeutic situation the non-directive role of the therapist, has been found to serve this purpose. A more precise understanding of this factor and of related variables will be of help in deciding the construction of a projection test and in directing its use.

On the basis of the theoretical views here outlined it is possible to isolate some of the main variables which determine the clarity with which the dynamic tension systems are revealed in terms of object relationships. Five such related variables, or rather groups of variables, operating in the immediate stimulus situation may be considered:

## (i) *The motivational situation*

It will be generally agreed that a sufficient involvement of the total personality is required for the unconscious as well as the conscious components to be fully deployed in response to the immediate stimulus situation. A most important factor which makes for such involvement by an individual is his own acceptance of the situation as appropriate and potentially helpful in his efforts to obtain relief of tension, and, in particular, the possibility of transferring unconscious object relations upon the clinician-patient relationship as part of this effort.

The experience of pain and tension in relation to the world of people and things provides motivational set within the individual. The clinical situation which involves medical and para-medical professional relationships is conventionally appropriate for the



## THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE TECHNIQUE

investigation of personal and private difficulties. Helpful as these motivational forces are, the ability to reveal the more primitive tension systems with any degree of directness requires therapeutic skill in the role adopted by the investigator. With the therapist the task is more readily accepted by the subject: the fact that he is a therapist makes it permissible (and "safe") for the patient to put upon him some aspects of his unconscious objects, and the therapist's non-attacking behaviour, and analytic skill, gradually make it more and more possible for the patient to project these objects in varying aspects associated with increasingly primitive needs and fears. Where projective methods are used by the psychologist, the orientation of the task towards the therapy influences the motivational set in this direction, while the behaviour of the psychologist, as the patient puts out upon him certain unconscious objects (symbolically represented also in responses to the test stimuli), makes it possible for the patient to continue to project these objects with like, or increasing, clarity, as the sequence of stimuli is dealt with. In both instances the permissive behaviour of the investigator shows to the patient that in reality he does not confirm the anxieties and catastrophes which are a part of his unconscious phantasies, and therefore more of these phantasies are likely to emerge.

The influence of the transference relationship developed in a psychodiagnostic interview has been discussed with illustrations by the writer elsewhere (1953). For purposes of evaluating the performance in response to test stimuli it is important to recognize the dominant transference relationship of the subject with the psychologist. This may be recognized in the behaviour and test responses, against a background of knowledge of the subject's expressed problem and the details of how he has come to the present interview. The dominant transference relationship provides the perspective in which the subject's attempts to obtain relief of tension are made. Where a different kind of transference relationship was dominating, a picture of the personality dynamics would be given in different perspective. Once this relationship is recognized it becomes possible to examine the individual's responses and behaviour in sequence, to evaluate the roles and role changes which the subject adopts in trying to resolve



unconscious tension, including the range and efficiency of his defensive roles at an unconscious as well as a conscious level.

This awareness of what the interview or projective test situation means to the subject is necessary in carrying through the procedures, as well as in understanding the behaviour and data obtained. Such an awareness means that the investigator's view of what is going on in the interview is geared to that of his subject. Thereby he may be able to deal with such anxieties as may prevent the subject from entering into the task or completing it, and he may also provide a suitable condition of closure in the subject after what may have been a very stressful experience. This understanding may also offer valuable guidance in the general conduct of the interview, in particular as to where more detailed inquiries should be made, and how far they may be pressed without producing too much anxiety.

How fully and at what depth this aspect of the subject's performance may be understood must depend, to a large extent, upon the skill and experience of the psychologist. For example, it is a fairly common experience for a subject to reveal quite clearly that he regards a test situation as very much like a school situation, in which anxieties about his relations with authority are strong. The emphasis may be upon fear of making mistakes, anxiety about rivalling authority, or matching up to the requirements of authority. The deeper significance of such anxieties, and the related unconscious wishes, will be less clearly revealed. Information which will provide hypotheses about their nature will always be available (even though it may not always be understood) from the way the subject selects from the total situation presented to him, and from the way he structures and gives meaning to what he selects.

Where a projection test situation matches in some important respect the dominant anxiety which the subject brings to the interview, the effect on the performance (and indeed upon the subject) may be particularly striking. In such instances the subject's more usual deployment of unconscious wishes, anxieties, and defences will not be seen; the picture presented will be typical of the subject but it may represent him in a breakdown or near breakdown condition. For example, in a case reported by



Malaf and Phillipson (1955) a patient who had shown evidence of paranoid and psychotic disorder in psychiatric interview was asked to undergo a Rorschach investigation two or three days after this interview, which he had described as the worst experience of his life. His performance in the test showed an overt psychotic condition, with such inadequate defences and uncertain contact with reality that the need for hospitalization might have been suggested. It became clear subsequently, however, that the patient came to the institution with a dominant anxiety that he might be certified, and that having got through the psychiatric interview without this happening, though with very great strain, the challenge of the Rorschach test doubly confirmed his anxiety, which circumstance appears to have been responsible for a temporary psychotic breakdown in the test situation. That he was asked to attend for out-patient treatment very soon afterwards provided for him a therapeutic outcome of this experience, and a retest some weeks afterwards, while showing many of the same psychotic features, gave evidence of a much more integrated personality—a picture more closely in keeping with the psychiatrist's experience of the patient during the intervening time.

Similar, though less dramatic instances, where the effect of the situation may be very clearly seen, often occur when a patient is first interviewed by a clinician of one sex and then passed on to a psychologist of the opposite sex for projective tests. Thus the situation as a whole, as well as an individual projection test presentation, e.g. a picture situation or an ink blot, may match the situation inherent in the dominant phantasy of the patient, i.e. it may represent an object relationship situation similar to that from which a dominant unconscious phantasy developed (see iii, page 19).

In passing it may be noted that the relevance of this variable, the motivational set, or meaning of the situation to the subject, should be considered in experimental work quite outside the clinical field.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The influence of the total field situation, and of the transference relationship, in experimental investigations has been noted by several writers. For example, Sells (1952) comments on Gardner Murphy's discussion of Howell's study of



- (ii) *The degrees of tension in the tension systems of the individual as described above.*

Basically the degree of tension will depend upon certain innate features of personality such as general "excitability" and tolerance for frustration and pain, together with the amount of pain the individual has experienced in the frustration of his primitive needs. The strength of the tension will derive from the importance to the individual, as a developing organism, of the needed early relationships in question; the spread or isolation of the tension will depend upon this experience together with the individual's ability to develop ways of dealing with his bad internal objects, while preserving good objects in the external world. The extent to which his conscious relations with early objects confirm or invalidate the unconscious phantasy relations, built up in response to frustration, will influence the range and efficiency of the methods of dealing with the tension.

Where the tension is great the individual will tend to superimpose his relations with unconscious phantasy objects upon the stimulus field, directly or in clear symbolic form, whether or not the external object relations situation "fits", or matches, his unconscious tension system; his awareness of the reality features of the

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persistence to illustrate these problems. He quotes Murphy's discussion as follows:

"The persistence measured in this experiment is the endurance of pain while the experimenter looks on. Eight situations are presented, such as 'edged instrument pressed against thumb', 'holding hand over hot coils', and so forth. Each situation becomes more gruelling until the subject says stop; hence, the time that elapses until the word is given measures the amount of punishment. (The raw correlation of endurance in four of these situations with endurance in the other four is about .80, which gives a reliability coefficient of .90 for the eight.) All eight tests involve the acceptance of pain for the sake of making an impression on the experimenter and hence seeing oneself favourably. There is no way of telling to what extent the scores express the intensity of the physiological pain mechanisms (for example, one person may feel less pain than another in response to the same stimulus) and to what extent they express the sheer need to appear heroic, but we can be certain that persistence as represented here is not what might be called a simple physiological trait like 'tissue lag' or autonomic threshold; it is courage in a specific authority-laden situation."

Maddox (1952) reports an experiment with the dynamometer persistence test in which it was shown that the performance was largely a function of the affectional relations of the individuals present in the test situation.



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stimuli may be impaired in some important aspects. Where the tension is great and the defences strong the unconscious object relations may be expressed only at a distance symbolically, and the dynamic nature of the unconscious wish and the feared consequences may be hidden; they may show more directly in response to a particular stimulus situation which "fits" the underlying dynamic system, i.e. where the tension is increased as described below.

Thus, in general, evidence on the degree of tension in a dynamic system may come out of the evaluation of perceptual discrepancies and of the distance from the surface of unconscious dynamics, in relation to the defensive effort. But different combinations of the three variables described in the following paragraphs will be seen to influence the degree of tension experienced by the personality, and the way in which and extent to which it is dealt with, in specific situations.

### (iii) *The "fit" between the stimulus situation and the dynamic tension systems of the individual*

Where the stimulus situation is structured<sup>1</sup> in a way which lends itself to "fit" or matching with the dominant tension systems within the individual the tension will be increased. It may be that the structured situation matches an unresolved conflict situation within the individual, wherein the gratification of an early need is threatened and feelings of primitive anger are evoked. These primitive feelings may conflict with the need to preserve the frustrating object because he or she is also a needed object, and also with the need to avoid the consequences of such destructive wishes in terms of retaliation.

For example in a group therapy situation where the patients have put out upon the therapist aspects of their needed dependent relationships, the situation of his leaving them and handing over to another therapist will match in varying ways the patients' phantasies about rejection (it will match earlier situations in which the patients were dependent upon a parent figure who in phantasy

<sup>1</sup> The term "structure" is not used here in the sense of a patterning of non-dynamic units, but rather with the same implication as in modern physics; not of things but of events.



and/or reality rejected them). Individual patients will express their anxieties about the consequences of unconscious wishes evoked by this matching situation in varying ways, depending upon the characteristics of their own individual tension systems, for example in terms of rejection, retaliation, destruction of a rival with consequent retaliation by the rival's partner, etc.

A situation which matches an underlying object relationship situation, and at the same time reduces the possibilities for the patient to use well-established defences, may represent an important point of change in psychotherapy. For example,<sup>1</sup> a patient who had sought psychiatric help because of frigidity and generally unsatisfactory relations with her husband, was able to mask her intense hostility to men and her underlying intention to provoke them to fight over her, while in a mixed therapeutic group, by her coquettish behaviour and her usual defensive role of the simple innocent little girl. The main dynamics of her problem were not revealed until an occasion when the other women members of the group were absent. She was then faced with a situation in which she was the only woman present with three male members of the group. This situation closely matched her own family situation and, since the women members in the group whom she had previously relied upon to provide safety for her offensive and defensive behaviour were absent, she became acutely anxious. The recognition of the nature of this anxiety, that she might provoke intense quarrelling among the men, brought to the surface her underlying aggressive attitude. This therapeutic experience started a phase of rapid progress in the patient's treatment. Further examples of responses to specific stimulus situations in group psychotherapy are given in some detail by Ezriel (op. cit.) and by the writer (1953).

A particularly striking example of a patient's responses to projection test pictures which matched one of her main tension systems is to be found in the second of the briefer case studies given in Chapter III. In the series of pictures used, three show ambiguous three-person situations, and in her stories to two of these the patient treats them as two-person situations. Inquiry showed that, in fact, she did not see a third person in the pictures, although

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Dr. John Kelnar for this example.



they are seen as three-person situations by most subjects. Her perception of the situations and her treatment of them reveals her overriding need for exclusive attention and her unconscious hostility to any rival. In unconscious terms the third person is killed off. From another point of view, by omitting to see the third person she gets exclusive attention, and at the same time avoids facing in reality the extreme jealousy and hostility which the recognition of the three-person situations might have evoked.

In a projection test the subject will superimpose on the stimulus situation a pattern of object relations to which it most lends itself in terms of working out the individual's dominant tension system. How clearly the unconscious object relationships are projected upon such situations depends upon the degree of tension in the dynamic system, the extent to which the situation matches or confirms the subject's unconscious hypotheses, and the concomitant reality features of the situation, which may confirm or contradict these hypotheses.

(iv) *The reality content of the stimulus situation*

Ambiguous material is used in projective work with the justification that such material throws the subject back upon his own resources and enables him to reveal more clearly the attitudes and expectancies with which he views the external world. As G. Murphy puts it (1947) "The more tightly organized, the better structured the world pattern, the less it can be controlled by the inner pattern; the more lowly structured the more the inner pattern controls it." Similarly Bruner, *et al.* (1951) show experimentally that the more ambiguous the stimulus the more readily it may be used to confirm personality-based "hypotheses".

In terms of our present theoretical approach the proposition may be restated; the more ambiguous the stimulus situation the more feasible it is for the individual to structure it in terms of his dominant tension systems, while the more definite the reality content of the stimulus the more fully will the nature of the unconscious wishes and fears be hidden. Or, relating this proposition to the previous variable, it may be said that the more a situation matches the unconscious object relation situation, while not contradicting its beliefs in respect of other reality features, the more



fully will the stimulus be moulded to the pattern of the underlying tension system. In such a situation the extent to which the reality features of the stimulus are ignored, violated, over-emphasized in a hyper-vigilant manner, or used constructively will depend upon the ego strength and the kind of defences at its disposal. For example, only when the tension is very great and the ego and its defences weak will a "popular" stimulus situation, such as the popular areas in Rorschach cards, be very much changed. Traces of unconscious needs and feared consequences may be revealed in the slight variations from popular usage of the stimulus and in the selection and emphasis of particular features of it.

The ability of the ego to use external reality, either defensively to control unconscious forces, or creatively to come to terms with the world, depends on the extent to which an individual has repressed and therefore been unable to modify the phantasies which dominated his view of the world as an infant. But, whatever the strength of the ego and the range and efficiency of its defences, the ambiguity or controvertibility of a stimulus situation makes it more permissible for the individual to put out on to it aspects of his unconscious object relations in an attempt to obtain relief of tension. The maximal degree of structure to make feasible a clear expression of these object relations will depend upon the possibilities inherent in the total situation of giving it form and meaning by reconciling the underlying structure of the personality with consciously acceptable forms.

(v) *The "reality context" in which the stimulus situation is presented*

An additional influence upon the stimulus value of a situation is the "context of reality" in which the structured content is presented. In therapy this would relate to the emotional climate of the situation, varying with the individuality of the therapist (and other members of the situation in groups), and with the sequence of events. In projection tests it would relate to these factors also, but in addition the "reality context" of the stimulus, for example the light texture, blackness, colour, in the Rorschach blots appear to represent similar stimulus values. These features of a stimulus situation appear to intensify the specific needs and anxieties contained within the tension systems imposed upon the main structure



of the situation. They also influence the kind of defences deployed and the efficiency of their operation. They represent cues which have meaning for the subject in terms of the apparent warmth or coldness, the invitingness or threateningness, of the human relations aspect of the situation, and their effect has much in common with that of the counter-transference in therapy.

The more precise definition of these variables, and the differentiation of their interrelations in terms of the present theoretical viewpoint, will require systematic observation of behaviour in situations which tend to highlight the deployment of unconscious and conscious dynamic systems. Attention to the five variables, or rather groups of variables, here discussed, in the construction and use of a projective test, will represent a first step in this direction.

The Object Relations Technique to be described below is an attempt to develop a method of personality investigation based upon the psycho-analytic theory of unconscious object relations. The construction of the test, its method of use and the technique of interpretation are derived from the concepts outlined in the preceding pages. The main variables used in the construction of the stimulus situations relate to those described in iii, iv, v, above:

- A. The "object" content, more precisely the object relationship content. This represents the primary stimulus value.
- B. The reality content: the degree of structure, and the amount of reality content available in the situation, which may confirm or contradict unconscious expectancies as well as providing defensive material.
- C. The reality context, which relates to the atmosphere of the situation, the apparent warmth or coldness, of the invitingness or threat in the situation.

The attempt is made to provide a range of stimuli which cover the basic object relations situations. These social situations or "object situations" and the reality features in the pictures are systematically varied within the series. In order to highlight the perceptual process and discrepancies within it; the degree of structure or ambiguity is nearer to Rorschach than to Murray's T.A.T. pictures, and the other features of the presentation which vary the reality context of the situations are also related to the shading, darkness, and colour values used in Rorschach.



## Chapter Two

### DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT RELATIONS TEST

THE material consists of three series of four pictures and a blank card. Each picture is approximately 6 in.  $\times$  7 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. in size and mounted on a card approximately 9 in.  $\times$  11 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. Each of the series, designated A, B, C series respectively, presents the main object relations situations: a one-person, two-person, three-person, and a group situation.<sup>1</sup> The individual pictures in the series are designated A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, A<sub>3</sub>, A<sub>4</sub>, and similarly for the B and C series. These basic object relations situations are varied in the three series in respect of reality content and reality context. These features, which are closely related, will be described more fully below.

The attempt has been made to present the basic stimulus situation (i.e. the object relations situation) and the reality content at a degree of ambiguity which permits of very varied use by the subject. The persons in all the situations are intended to be ambiguous as to sex and age. Detail in the figures, in particular the faces, is either omitted or very indefinite. There is nothing in this detail which, of itself, would indicate feeling or attitude or relationship with other figures: neither is any particular activity or direction of movement portrayed.

How far these intentions have been represented in the pictures is still uncertain, but normative studies of an out-patient clinic

<sup>1</sup> A four-person situation has been used in addition, experimentally, to cover the first sibling situation. These pictures are not included in the present series, because experience suggested that the additional information obtained did not outweigh the disadvantage of extending the whole series beyond a length manageable in one interview.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT RELATIONS TEST

population of 50 cases, and of 40 normal adolescent girls, together with experience in using the technique over the past four years, suggest that the stimuli are, in fact, very indefinite in these respects. A summary of these normative data is given in an appendix. It is recognized that this information is incomplete and inadequate, both by reason of the small number of cases included in the studies, and because the populations are highly selected. With the publication of the test material it is hoped that supplementary studies will be made to provide firmer criteria for assessing the extent to which a subject's interpretation of the figures and content is unusual and how well it matches the stimuli presented. Such judgements are extremely important as indications of the way in which, and the extent to which, unconsciously perceived object relations prevent an accurate or full perception of the stimulus situation.

In planning the pictures, and in the selection of those for the present series from earlier drafts, particular attention was given to their acceptability to both normal and clinical subjects, and to their evocativeness. A projection test situation by the nature of the task must always stir fears and anxieties. While the ambiguity of the stimulus helps to allay the reality threat, it also takes away many of the supports and defensive possibilities which well-known reality situations provide. Nevertheless, where the task is sufficiently off-centre from the underlying aims of the investigation, yet where it is in reality clearly what it is represented to be, for example in this instance, an effort of imagination, the challenge of the situation is more readily accepted. It seems from experience that the media in which these pictures are drawn, together with their artistic qualities, strengthen their challenge and increase their acceptability.

Of more than 300 patients who have taken the test very few have failed to produce a worth-while result; complete failures were not more than 1 in 40 cases. With a small normal group of 30 subjects there have been no failures, and all have produced stories of sufficient length for a fairly detailed analysis to be made. The length of the stories produced varies considerably. In the above groups where the intellectual and educational level was largely above average, the length of the stories ranges from



## DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT RELATIONS TEST

approximately 50 to 250 words, the more common length being something over 100 words. Where the subject has been able to involve himself in the task to the extent of making a definite effort to give life to the imagined situations, the personality dynamics may be revealed more fully in the shorter stories than in much longer ones, where the defensive efforts are unusually strong.

### *The "A" series of pictures*

The figures are drawn in light charcoal shading, giving a quality of texture almost the same as Card VII of Rorschach. There is no definite setting in terms of objects of the physical world. Light and shade in the same texture provide the setting which lends itself to very many interpretations by subjects. There is, therefore, little or no reality content other than the human figures.

What reality content there is, is provided by the light and dark of the shading and the texture of the pictures. These qualities are related to the Rorschach determinant for texture, "c" for which the generally accepted rationale is in terms of early dependent relationships and needs for affection and security. It is thought that the emotional climate of the situation presented in this series will tend to stimulate primitive dependent needs and the consequent anxieties, while the indefiniteness of the situation and the absence of other reality content will help to emphasize the subject's ways of dealing with these early tension systems.

### *The "B" series*

Here the human figures are drawn in much darker shading, still in charcoal to provide depth. The darkness and the depth quality of the shading is similar to that of Cards IV and V of Rorschach, although it permits far less internal differentiation than does the dark shading in Rorschach. In this series the figures are placed in conventional, but ambiguous, physical environments, two of them being indoor and two outdoor situations.

Like the figures, the environmental setting is definite in outline. This and the darkness is intended to place the emphasis on phantasy relations with threatening and uncompromising objects.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT RELATIONS TEST

The depth provided in the very dark charcoal shading may also tend to evoke experience and expression of anxieties about the control of such forces inside the self and in the external world.

### *The "C" series*

In this series a more mature and lifelike, though still ambiguous representation of the figures is given, using a different style of drawing. The figures are drawn in soft, light or medium line, and are again placed in conventional physical environments which, however, are drawn with much detail and fullness. Colour is used as an essential part of the artistic presentation, with particular areas of colour designed to present a strong emotional challenge as with the coloured cards in Rorschach.

Unlike the A and B series considerable detail, which is still sufficiently indefinite to permit of varied interpretations by subjects, is given to both the human figures and the physical environment. The intention is to present a world rich in opportunity and challenge. The level of reality presented is mature, and it is thought that the introduction of colour intensifies the threats and supports in the stimulus in terms of real emotional involvement.

### *The blank card*

This situation is used as in Murray's T.A.T. series.

It is most likely that the presentation of the first picture represents a point of maximal tension, in particular because of the motivations discussed previously (page 14). Consequently, in an attempt to obtain relief from this tension, the dominant unconscious phantasy is expressed and the transference relationship with the psychologist revealed with some degree of clarity in response to this picture.

In his story to the Blank the subject may not only reveal the transference relationship he has worked towards throughout the task, he may often summarize his present problems as he is experiencing them and what are for him the most acceptable methods of solution. It is a picture of the world he would create for himself to gratify his needs while yet avoiding the threats and consequences he fears in reality.



## DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT RELATIONS TEST

### DESCRIPTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL PICTURES

#### A SERIES

##### A1

*(Light shading: no defined environmental setting)*

In the middle foreground one upright human figure in silhouette, in slightly darker shading than the rest of the picture. Slightly to the left in the background, very faint lines of shading suggest a shape commonly described as a church door, church interior, or fountain. The human figure was intended to be ambiguous as to sex, but experience suggests it is much more commonly seen as male (90 percent). In the left foreground is a darker patch of shading, sometimes used as a second figure, usually female. The shading is broken by patches of light around the head and shoulders of the figure and in the top right of the picture.

##### A2

In slightly darker shading than in A1; silhouettes of two human figures, facing each other, take up the larger proportion of the picture. The silhouettes, except for the head and shoulders, which are in clearer outline, stand out only a little from the darkened shading in the bottom half and sides of the picture. The heads are slightly inclined forwards or towards each other. Between the heads is a very light shading area giving a vista effect: above the figure on the left the shading is also lighter.

##### A3

In middle distance on the right are silhouettes of two figures almost touching, the one on the left being slightly the taller, or standing a little in front of the other. Light shading surrounds these figures, becoming slightly darker towards their feet. On the left of the picture is the third figure standing out slightly from light shading. Diagonally, from right to left, the shading gives an effect which is often interpreted as a road or stream separating the two figures from a third. There is a large area of light around the top left corner. The setting for the situation, as in the case of A2 and A6, is very variously interpreted.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT RELATIONS TEST

### AG

The human content in this picture is a little less definite. Where the situation is detailed by the subjects, five or six figures are usually seen, often in two groups of three. Two or three figures stand out from the shading on the left; the silhouettes suggest to some subjects that they are sitting or kneeling figures. Three smaller silhouettes on the right are upright and are frequently described as at some distance away. Diagonally from right to left, both behind the former group, and between the two, are long patches of light and shade used variously by subjects as additional figures sleeping, as graves, small hills, etc. The shading is broken towards the top left, introducing light effects which are again variously used.

### B SERIES

*(Dark shading, almost black; clearly defined, rather uncompromising environmental setting)*

#### B1

Interior of a room. In the top half of the picture the wall of the room is in dark, almost black shading; towards the left, a door slightly open gives a sharp contrast of white area seen through the opening. In the doorway in dark and definite silhouette is a human figure, cut off towards the feet, and the shape of railings suggesting a staircase. To the left of the door is sketched a chest of drawers with what is usually taken as a mirror. In the bottom left corner is the end of a bed. There is some object draped over the bed rail. Light from the open door gives a patch of lightness across the room towards the chest and bed. The human figure is most usually seen as male (80 percent).

#### B2

Exterior situation. House in mid-distance on the left. Silhouette of two figures very close together under a tall tree in foreground on the right. The tree, the silhouettes and an area in the bottom left are in very dark, almost black shading. Somewhat lighter shading is used to portray the house and the area between it and



## DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT RELATIONS TEST

the two figures. There is no white in the picture. The area usually taken as the house door is darkened; in the windows are light and shade effects often taken to suggest lighting within.

### B3

Two merged silhouettes of human figures stand in an area of whiteness in the left centre of the picture. Behind is an open door through which the light might be coming: in the foreground another doorway framed in dark, almost black shading. Towards the right of this doorway is a half silhouette of a third figure, merging into or from an area of equal darkness. The situation is usually taken as an interior of a house or as a view from the outside into some part of a house.

### BG

Two arches in a structure which is broken in middle distance and which stands beside a "roadway" or "pier" which goes off to infinity, diagonally from the bottom left hand corner of the picture. The structure is in dark shading and in the light areas of the two arches are silhouettes of human figures; in the archway nearer the left are five figures, the bodies merged into the dark shading, and in the second archway one upright figure. Shadow effects cross the "roadway". Through the arches and in the foreground, bottom right, are expanses of medium shading, sometimes used as water.

## C SERIES

*(Light line sketches, with colour in shading and detail: detailed environmental setting, with colour)*

### C1

Adaptation by the artist Madame Olga Dormondie from her illustration of Vercors' cottage, for limited edition of "Le Silence de la Mer" (1947). An interior of a room, looking from the foreground on the left across a table, to the corner of the room on the right, in which is a window. In the window is an indefinite silhouette of a human figure. Under the window along the right

## DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT RELATIONS TEST

wall is a washbasin or kitchen sink. Over a kitchen chair in the right foreground is a towel, with bright red stripes across the ends. On the table is sketched a jug with flower shapes or twigs, two basins or cups, a plate, around each of which is less definite detail. Around the window to the left, over the silhouette and under the window colour shading, which is an essential part of the artist's interpretation, is more clearly recognized.

### C2

A silhouette outside a doorway through which is seen a part of the interior of a room, in which is the end of a bed and various lightly sketched objects, from which a chest with drawers and a wall picture are usually seen. On the bed is a shape usually taken to be a second human figure. Colour is again an integral part of the picture. The red of the picture frame and the yellow of the bedstead are most frequently named by subjects, with varying interpretations.

### C3

An interior of a room in which are sketched three figures. In the foreground on the right is seen the head and shoulders of a figure seated in a chair near a fireplace in the right wall, before which is standing a second figure, his right hand on the mantelpiece. On the right, seated across a table and facing the first figure, is a third, sketched in considerable detail but still ambiguous as to age, sex and attitude. On the mantelpiece is a large red globe-shaped object, often taken as a lamp, and a larger indefinite object with some colour which is variously interpreted. There is considerable detail represented in the room, on the table and on the far wall. Colour effects are usually associated with the fire or lighting, except for the bright red object, which is frequently given special significance.

### CG

A long stairway covering almost the whole of the picture with very strong white colour effects. On the top, in the left corner, is the shadow of a human figure over the top three steps, and at



## DESCRIPTION OF THE OBJECT RELATIONS TEST

the bottom, towards the right corner, a group from which are often distinguished three or four human figures, one of whom has an arm raised. Across the left bottom corner is the end of a wide balustrade which goes along the side of the stairway. Experience suggests that there are many deviations from this perception of the picture, and that perceptual distortions most frequently occur with it.

## ADMINISTRATION OF OBJECT-RELATIONSHIP TEST

It is important to understand the performance as a part of the total situation the subject finds himself in when taking the test, with special emphasis on the conscious and unconscious relations with the psychologist.

### *Introduction of the Test*

(a) As far as possible it should be presented with a purpose which the subject can share—at least in part of himself. In a clinical situation the patient will co-operate on this basis more fully than in most other situations, for the total situation is one which he can strive for relief of tension in a particularly self-involved way. The patient will appreciate the need to understand his problem from many points of view, the need to set him tasks so that the psychologist (for the psychiatrist) may understand how he attempts to accomplish them, his points of difficulty and satisfaction and so on. Many patients will recognize their problem is to do with relations with people and the Object Relations Test will therefore be accepted as very relevant.

In a non-clinical setting the presentation of the task will vary according to the situation and professional role of the psychologist: the total situation must always be noted and as far as possible the test fitted into it in a meaningful way.

(b) Where an introduction is necessary—there having been no earlier relations between psychologist and the subject—some such introduction as the following may be used:

“One way of understanding the things you are most interested in—things you do best, get a kick out of, feel most worth while—and the things you like doing less or have difficulty in, would be



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to ask you to tell me all the things you have done and discuss them in detail. Another way is to ask you to do a number of things and discuss with you what you feel about the several items. This afternoon (morning) I suggest we do one rather longer task instead, but so that I can understand it more fully I need to know something about your general interests first, so will you tell me, perhaps quite briefly, the sort of things you really enjoy most and then those you're not so keen on, or that you really dislike."

This introduction gives the subject time to feel himself into the situation and it also sets the dynamic pattern for the test, i.e. the likes and dislikes *vis-à-vis* the good and bad "object" relations he will be dealing with in his stories. This brief discussion of interests should not unusually be extended—five to ten minutes should be time enough. It is better to avoid getting involved in discussion before the test. But after taking the subject's spontaneous contributions, prompt if he is tongue-tied so that he does feel he has given a fair picture of his satisfactions and frustrations or dislikes.

### *Administration*

An adaptation of the following, depending on the situation and age and background of the subject.

"I'm going to show you a number of pictures on cards like this. I want you to look at each one and imagine what it might represent. Try to imagine it is some kind of situation and then bring it to life in your mind so that you can imagine what might be going on in the situation, what the people might be concerned with, what they are doing and what might happen next. We'll do one as an example first of all, then you can do the others yourself. As you look at the picture, make up a brief story about it and try to build it up in this way: Say first of all how you imagine the situation you have in mind came about (do that quite briefly), then tell what you imagine is going on in the situation as fully as you can, and finally (quite briefly) say how you imagine it would turn out or what might happen next." Present the first picture. Take what is given spontaneously, then prompt (how much depends on your feeling about the subject) so that the three parts of the story have been covered. This sets the pattern for



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future stories. Do not push the subject; such remarks as "Could you say a bit more about what is going on in this situation?" or "Can you say how it turns out or what could happen next?" are as far as one should go.

With many subjects it is unnecessary to give any guidance, just accept the story as what is wanted and proceed.

If there is a good deal of difficulty with the first picture and (a) the story that results is not very spontaneous because of the amount of prompting necessary or (b) the story is still brief or "thin" in content, it is permissible to say, "Well, you see the kind of thing now; could you make another story yourself from this picture?"

It is not advisable to do any prompting or to ask for alternatives in any subsequent stories, except for the blank card, where an alternative may be asked for at the end, or in the case of very inhibited subjects where some encouragement and/or support may be necessary.

*The order of presentations*, decided somewhat arbitrarily, is: A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>, A<sub>6</sub>, B<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>6</sub>, A<sub>3</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>6</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>, Blank ("A" representing light shading series, "B" dark shading, "C" colour; 1, 2, 3, 6, referring to the numbers of figures in the picture, one person, two persons, three persons and a group).

*Inquiry.* This will depend on the purpose of the personality investigation. In general the time taken (1½ hours average) leaves little for further inquiry, for there is a need for a brief discussion on the task and opportunity for the subject to ask questions.

Important points to be covered in the inquiry—i.e. when the test proper is finished, are:

- (a) Characters referred to but not detailed, when they appear to be of great importance in the story.
- (b) Unusual characterization, e.g. seeing figures opposite in sex to those usually seen. Ask for alternative stories.
- (c) Unusual perceptions: inquire as in Rorschach—where is it, what about it suggested the response—and encourage associations and alternative interpretations of the picture.
- (d) Where no solutions are attempted see how much support the patient needs to attempt one, and what kind(s) he can achieve.

## Chapter Three

### THE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STORIES

THE stories produced lend themselves to analysis according to the methods commonly used with Thematic Apperception Tests, for example those described by Murray (1943), Wyatt (1947), Rapaport (1946), Tomkins (1947), Henry (1947), and Aron (1949).

In developing methods of analysing and interpreting the material obtained with the Object Relations Test very considerable use has been made of the experience recorded by these and other workers with T.A.T. In order to illustrate as fully as possible the application of the present theoretical viewpoint to the analysis of the stories, a very detailed case study is presented. The attempt is made to analyse as many as possible of the aspects of the story productions, especially those usually separated into formal characteristics and content, by reference to object relations theory. Following this detailed case study, briefer examples illustrating alternative and shorter methods of using the data will be given.

As a first step in the detailed case study the attempt is made to build up hypotheses which will explain the patient's behaviour throughout the sequence of the interview. The question asked in respect of every recorded detail of behaviour is, "Why does this patient behave in this particular way in this situation?" Hypotheses to explain these samples of behaviour in terms of the interplay of unconscious object relations and more conscious motivations, as revealed in the patient's ways of dealing with the situation, are made in a story-by-story sequence analysis. For the first three stories the hypotheses are built up in some detail in an attempt to



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make clear the processes of thinking by which they are made, and also to illustrate the relevance of the object relations theory to the study of processes of perception.

These hypotheses can only be made on the basis of clinical experience in which similar patterns of behaviour in like situations have been observed, and action taken, or predictions made, which tend to confirm the value of the explanation attempted. Sensitivity to the personality dynamics revealed in such samples of behaviour derives from first-hand experience of similar dynamic processes under the controlled conditions where they are focused in analytic psychotherapy. It may be argued that these interpretative hypotheses are entirely subjective and indeed far-fetched. Two questions may be asked in response to such criticism. In the first place, how else can the behaviour be explained sufficiently fully to make possible either therapeutic action or prediction of behaviour in like situations? Secondly, is it not a proper and scientific method to make such hypotheses, though largely subjective, provided that a careful check is made for additional evidence to confirm or disprove them and also for their ability to explain manifest behaviour as reported of the subject independently?

After the first three stories the sequence analysis is continued in briefer form and the hypotheses stated more directly. The object of the analysis is to characterize the main unconscious tension systems and the range of efficiency of the methods of defence in terms of object relations. The attempt is made to obtain information on the dominating unconscious object relations, the strength of the tensions experienced, the main fears and anxieties to be dealt with, and the kind and quality of object relations built up by the patient in order to relieve these tensions. Following the examination of the patient's behaviour throughout the sequence of the stories, a schematic tabulation of the findings for one story is given as an illustration of the way in which an approach to a more quantified assessment of some of the personality dynamics is attempted in the final summary.

In this summary it is possible to make an assessment of the extent to which the unconscious tension dominates the subject's relations with external reality, and the extent to which more constructive mature relations with the external world can be made



## A CASE STUDY IN DETAIL

on the basis of consciously validated experience as distinct from phantasy-determined expectancies. Reference to the main variables introduced into the pictures, i.e. the object relation situation, the reality content and the reality context, will indicate the circumstances in which more effective relations are achieved as well as where breakdowns may occur.

Finally the prediction of behaviour in response to specific object relation situations in varying circumstances is attempted.

### A. A CASE STUDY IN DETAIL

#### *Basic information*

Male, aged 36; married; one child.

The eldest of four children; a brother 2 years younger and two sisters, 4 and 5 years younger.

His father died when the patient was five. He continued to live with his mother until the age of seven when he was placed in a foster home where he stayed until the age of fifteen. His mother was killed in an accident when he was eleven.

#### *Presenting Problem* (as stated by the patient).

Conflict between duty to his wife and a wish to break the relationship and marry a girl who is younger than himself. He feels there is nothing wrong with himself except that his unsatisfactory relationship with his wife, and the present conflict, make it impossible for him to do his work in an advertising firm. At the same time he asks for help in finding out whether he should marry this other woman, or whether there is something in himself that makes him incapable of marriage.

#### *Situation in which the test was given*

After a first psychiatric interview he was asked to see the clinical psychologist for an investigation which would help the psychiatrist to understand his difficulties more clearly before advising him about a suitable form of help.

#### *Behaviour and relationship with psychologist*

He arrived ten minutes late for the interview, with apologies, blaming work ties and difficulties with transport. He is a tall, thin,



fair-haired man with a small pointed beard. In manner he is very quiet, soft-voiced and deferential. His speech is staccato and tight-lipped; the tone is serious, earnest, and at times almost reverent. He not only speaks quietly and with great intensity but also chooses his words most carefully. Frequently he puts his finger to his mouth and on occasion bites it.

After the stories were completed he mentioned his difficulty in expressing himself, his tenseness and inability to let his imagination out.

### *Comment on behaviour and first impression*

Certain tentative hypotheses may be made, at least in the form of questions to be kept in mind, about the patient's behaviour before and during the interview.

This sample of behaviour is considered in detail, retrospectively, i.e. with reference to information which derives from the story analysis, in order to illustrate the importance of the transference relationship during the interview.

Why does he come late? When he apologizes he states his reasons in terms of work ties and difficulty with transport. He is a man used to the world of business and to professional mores, and he is familiar with the ways of getting to the clinic. Either of the reasons he gives for coming late might be acceptable by itself, though questionable; his need to provide two excuses suggests there may be other and deeper reasons for this behaviour. Some tentative hypotheses to explain it may be made after considering other aspects of his behaviour in the interview.

The patient's manner is deferential, his tone of voice is soft and serious and at times reverent. On the other hand, he speaks with great intensity, choosing his words carefully; his expression is noted as "tight lipped". Why is it that this patient, who is well educated and experienced in relations with professional people, has to behave in this way when he is seeking help with the problem he presents to the clinic? To comment on his behaviour in terms of anxiety offers too general an explanation, and would not differentiate this pattern of behaviour from that of the large body of patients who attend the clinic. His deferential manner together with the soft serious tone of voice suggests a need to placate the



psychologist, which in turn presupposes a fear of him. Does his behaviour give any indications of the nature or quality of this fear? As well as the intensity in his voice, there is a strong pleading note in the way he expresses himself. At the same time he appears to be attempting to create the impression that his own motivations are wholly and unquestionably good. It is possible, therefore, that he is experiencing considerable tension which has to do with:

(a) preserving a good relationship with the psychologist; this in terms of a perfect relationship from the patient's side (he emphasizes good feelings and good intentions only), and also on the psychologist's part (he speaks to him with deference and in a reverent tone of voice);

(b) an intense anxiety that he may not be able to maintain this relationship; the fear being that the psychologist will become a threatening person in some way unless this perfect relationship is maintained.

The behaviour is almost completely defensive. There are no indications of the nature of any personal gratifications, conscious or unconscious, which he might be seeking. These are carefully hidden. May it be that any expression of such personal wishes is to be avoided, because it would inevitably lead to the good relationship he seeks to maintain changing into a bad, threatening relationship? The careful control of his choice and use of words, his tight-lipped manner, his behaviour in putting his finger to his mouth and on occasion biting it suggests that the underlying unconscious fantasy relationship he would like to make, and the quality of the gratification he would seek, belong to an "oral" level of activity. Does the dominant tension arise from unconscious phantasies which derive mainly from this level of experience? At the end of the test he draws attention to his difficulty in expressing himself, and he mentions his tenseness and inability to let his imagination out. But by the side of this comment one has to note the efficiency and care with which he does express himself in building up stories during the test. Verbal expression and control are of considerable importance to him.

The general picture of his behaviour, therefore, is seen to contain sharp contradictions which may be explained in part by the



tentative hypotheses already made. On the one hand he seeks to put the psychologist into the role of a person whom he can revere, who is helpful and forgiving, and upon whom he can be dependent. At the same time he shows a lack of trust in such a relationship by coming late, and by his elaborate efforts to maintain a careful control over his expression of thought and feeling. It seems almost as if the only relationship he feels safe with is a perfect one; one in which there is no criticism or questioning of the other's motives.

It is very largely in these terms that he perceives the situation in which he does the projection test presented by the psychologist. He brings to the situation certain unconscious expectancies which dominate his conscious perception of the situation. Unconsciously he seems to expect that the psychologist, far from being helpful, will become a threatening figure unless he can maintain an ideal relationship. To do this requires that he must be very passive and placatory, and that he must carefully control any expression of self-centred motivations.

Examination of this expectancy in terms of the three phases which describe an unconscious tension system, as postulated in the theoretical section of this paper (page 12), namely, the unconscious wish, the feared consequences and the defensive efforts, shows that the emphasis is markedly on defensive effort. Intense anxiety and fear may be inferred directly from the patient's behaviour; only very indirect inferences can be made about the nature and strength of the unconscious wishes.

It is clear, therefore, that a large part of the defensive effort is concerned with controlling these unconscious wishes so that they do not find expression and consequently face the patient with the threats implied in his manifest behaviour. If this is so, the challenge to participate in a psychodiagnostic examination, more especially a projective test, will tend to increase the anxiety in the tension system, for it faces him with the task of revealing what he most fears to show. That he is able to complete the test, and at least superficially maintain an impression of competence and efficiency in what he does and how he does it, may be taken as evidence of the strength of his defences which enable him to deny the existence of his unconscious wishes and anxieties.



*A sequence analysis of the stories*

Story A1

2"—A static sort of picture—people seem to be doing nothing, waiting. No limit to the build-up of the story.

80"—Perhaps I approach it too seriously.

150"—I find myself completely bogged—I fancy quite easily the states of mind of the three people I think are involved, but I can't combine impressions for the various elements—the striking piece of light on the left and misty form at the back, which could be a church door or waterfall. (Serious, "reverent" voice and manner.) I am more and more reminded of Dante's Inferno—inmates of the Inferno—three of them after a visit by Dante. On the right of the main figure—a man—is the despondent figure of a girl—the light shining on her right shoulder. The figure to the left is more difficult to make out—a late middle-aged woman, dressed in dark clothes with her gaze to the head of the man's figure. They're contemplating rather morosely, at least the man is morose, the girl on the right has a more poignant element in her feelings. Mainly the picture makes me think of despair and the dark half on the left weighs more than the generally light half on the right.

It will not end in any satisfactory way, I'm afraid.

The almost spontaneous response to the first picture shows a sharp conflict of feeling: *a static sort of picture—people seem to be doing nothing—waiting. No limit to the build-up of the story.* There is a complete blockage and inability to give life to the situation by the side of a feeling that the story, i.e. the social situation, may be built up without limit. What does this mean? What forces within him produce these responses? Does his behaviour represent within him a need for strict control to the extent that he fears to get involved in the situation at all, by the side of opposite feelings, feelings of getting involved without limit, i.e. without control. He sees the picture as representing a social situation, yet it is only after a very long pause, followed by a great deal of concern with other details of the picture, that he is able to specify the people he sees in the situation and ascribe to them any role or activity.



Why is he in such difficulty about revealing his feelings in terms of the people and their relations with one another as he sees them in the picture? After a long pause, he says, *perhaps I approach it too seriously*. What does he mean? Is he expressing his own consciousness of the serious dilemma in which he is placed; saying that, although consciously he is aware that the situation he is in should not evoke such tenseness and blockage, such serious implications as those he is concerned with, yet he is compelled to see and feel about the situation in the way he does? Is he seeking reassurance about the threats and anxieties inherent in the social situation he sees, and which are transferred also on to his relation with the psychologist, before he can involve himself more fully in it? It is noted that his manner of speaking is extremely serious, almost reverent in tone.

Two and a half minutes after the presentation of the picture he still finds himself *completely bogged*. Is he attempting to work out the dilemma during this time; trying to find a way of meeting the requirements of the situation, i.e. make a story in response to the picture, while yet avoiding those threats which are a part of the phantasy evoked by the stimulus situation? He is still completely bogged, held back, inhibited as it were in making any attempt to resolve the dilemma. The inhibition shows itself in his inability to bring to life the situation he puts on to the picture, that is, in his inability to express the phantasied object relations he sees there and which he experiences also in his relation with the psychologist.

He now begins to describe the dramatic situation he is dealing with. He says, *I fancy quite easily the states of mind of the three people I think are involved, but I cannot combine impressions for the various elements; the striking piece of light on the left and the misty form at the back which could be a church door or a waterfall*. This picture, then, is seen as a three-person situation, which is not very usual. In a normative study of stories given by fifty patients, seven see more than three persons in the picture, four only see three persons, while the present patient is the only one in the sample who specifies that he sees one of the persons on the right of the main figure. Why this unusual perception? Is it possible to explain the particular unusual features of the perception in terms of the unconscious dynamics in the phantasy, the unconscious expectancy



he brings to this situation? In order to attempt such an explanation more precise information is necessary about the unconscious object relationships which might describe the tension system he is superimposing upon the picture stimulus.

He is clearly projecting on to the stimulus something of the three-person problem which he brings to the clinic, i.e. his own relationship with two women. Although he says in the story that it is easy for him to fancy the state of mind of the three people in the situation, there is something preventing him from bringing these people to life and permitting them to have relations one with another. Is this difficulty expressed in his inability to *combine impressions for the various elements*, i.e. to reconcile contradictions inherent in this three-person relationship; conflicting feelings which he cannot yet express directly in terms of relations with people, but which he displace on to the reality content and reality context of the picture? What do these *various elements* stand for; *the striking piece of light on the left and the misty form at the back, which could be a church door or a waterfall*? Do they represent aspects of the patient's phantasied relation with the two women mentioned later in the story? *The striking piece of light on the left* is a most unusual response, for the light is in fact on the right in the picture, where the third figure, *the girl with the poignant element in her feelings*, is seen. This, too, was noted as a very unusual perception. By placing *the striking piece of light* on the left of the picture is he representing an inability to keep separate aspects of his phantasy relations with the rather idealized woman seen on the right from those with the darker more threatening woman on the left? (He may also be seeing the picture from the viewpoint of the psychologist in this instance, which might suggest that he is concerned about the psychologist's possible attitude in response to his phantasied relations with this woman. Both these interpretations can only be surmises at this stage. The patient's tone of voice and manner clearly imply a need to maintain a safe relation with the psychologist, as if in some part of himself he were afraid of being attacked.)

What aspects of the patient's object relations are described by his reference to the *church door or a waterfall*? Does the former stand for an idealized kind of relationship, one in which there can be no question of aggressive wishes, while the latter suggests a more



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turbulent uncontrolled and basically aggressive relation? The inability to combine these elements may then represent his inability to bring together, or on the other hand, to keep separate his phantasied relationship with an ideal, non-aggressive woman, from those with a threatening, more sinister woman. It is, as if he cannot maintain a relation with the more idealized woman because she inevitably becomes mixed up with or changes into a more threatening figure. (The *striking piece of light* in one respect may be taken literally as an expression of this phantasy.) To have any relationship with these women is dangerous: *I am reminded more and more of Dante's Inferno*. May it be that his own unconscious wishes in relation to women are so demanding and aggressive that he fears his object must inevitably turn into a retaliating persecuting woman? It may be also that the phrase, *After a visit by Dante*, is a transference reference to the psychologist looking at his inner world, and an expression of anxiety about what he will see there.

The patient now characterizes the people in his story more definitely: *the despondent figure of the girl, with the more poignant element in her feelings, the main figure—a man, and the figure on the left, a late middle-aged woman, dressed in dark clothes*. There is no interaction between these people, no development of any relations; he can only contemplate the situation morosely. He feels despair at his inability to keep the needed relation with his object good, and at his failure to have any satisfying relation with women. This is because *the dark half on the left weighs more than the generally light half on the right*: i.e. the bad phantasy woman dominates his relationship with all women and the fear of this internal object as a threatening persecuting figure prevents him from making any relations at all. *It will not end in any satisfactory way, I'm afraid*. Is this final comment to be taken literally as an expression of the reason why there can be no satisfactory outcome?

It can be supposed, therefore, that this patient utilizes the stimulus situation in the first card to express his dominant unconscious tension, which represents also his present reality dilemma involving his older wife and younger girl friend. The conflict within this relationship with women characterizes almost the whole of his view of external reality. His perception of the stimulus,



as a whole and in its details, is largely determined by the unconscious object relationships which make up this tension system. The unusualness of his perceptions must be an indication of the strength of the tension in the system which impels such an individual interpretation of the stimulus; his method of perception which follows the blocked and cautious build-up of the story, emphasizes his intense effort to control the unconscious wishes, and avoid those consequences which he fears might result if these wishes were expressed in his adult relations with people. Any direct expression of frustration or aggression appears to be dangerous for him. He cannot strike positively in any direction to resolve his problem, to come to terms with people in the external world. Most of his effort is defensive.

The story ends with a feeling of despair and a fear that there can be no satisfactory solution. Relief of tension is impossible, because the needed dependent relation with a good object cannot be separated from the primitive destructive relationship with the bad frustrating aspects of this object. His primitive wishes involve not only the fear of destroying the needed object, but also the fear of retaliation. These wishes will turn the good object into a bad persecuting object. An attempt to keep separate the good and bad aspects of the relationship by splitting the object into two, as he does in the story and in real life, provides no solution, probably because of the strength of the primitive feelings involved and the level of psycho-biological development at which the frustration was experienced. It may be that his relations with the mother or substitute mother at that time (and indeed subsequently) confirmed in reality the unconscious phantasies built upon this early frustration. The absence of any aggressive wishes towards the interfering woman, and the inhibition imposed on any development of the relationship between the man and the good woman, i.e. the ban on any sexual wishes, might suggest that his experience with women, at an early important stage of sexual maturation, confirmed the still earlier phantasy that the satisfaction of any primitive need in a relation with women was forbidden and dangerous. That he wants the relationship with the good woman to develop into a sexual relation emerges in the next story.

The conflict is such that this patient can neither love nor hate,



because the one involves the other, not in more adult conscious terms, but in terms of primitive dependence, and destructiveness. The methods of dealing with this basic dilemma, the destructive wishes by the side of a need to preserve hope of a good relationship, include an attempt to keep separate the good and bad aspects of the phantasy object by splitting them on to different figures, idealization, denial of all destructive wishes, hyper-vigilance (and possibly some paranoid projection on to the bad woman). More superficial methods of defence are seen in the soft, placatory tone of voice and manner, and the general passivity, in the very careful intellectual control of feeling and expression which hides the aggressive ego-centred need to mould all the details of external reality, including relations with people, into the offensive-defensive pattern of his dominant tension system.

The outcome of the interaction between the unconscious wished-for relationships and the range of defensive relations built upon them is seen in the patient's superficial behaviour, including the formal characteristics of the story he produces, and his perception of the picture stimulus and of the total test situation. It is a compulsive phantasy-dominated pattern of behaviour, determined very largely by the patient's own inner needs and tensions. Yet on the surface his behaviour suggests a wish to please, gentleness, and concern for others. A similar contrast is seen in the lack of any achievement in the story as far as working out any problem of social relations is concerned, by the side of a superficial show of control and competence which characterizes the structure and expression of the story. These contrasts reflect the sharp conflicts in the tension system; they illustrate also the ways in which some semblance of equilibrium is preserved, so that the ego maintains a relation with external reality in spite of these inner tensions.

### *Story A2*

15"—My first impression is of a rather old-fashioned sentiment. The girl on the left and the man on the right, and the middle makes me think of a church but I can't see why it should make me think of this. They are engaged in an exchange of confidences of an amorous nature. They're—feeling deeply attached but they seem sad about it and their future life together



will show that each is exquisitely in tune with each other, but there will always be something—they are both introverts and not capable of that broad unfeeling kind of happiness. I'm taking it that they are in fact arranging life together—the girl has been proposed to and has bashfully accepted. Life is suggested by the light in the middle and by the impression of stepping forward. There will always be a strong undercurrent of sadness to happiness; a general sense of the tragic in life. She represents a type of person, very deeply attached, and him to her—underneath is a sense of insecurity and of the tragedy (sighs) which seems to underly human life. I think it will turn out very well, given their odd personalities, and again no cataclysms like death and war.

The response to this picture is given more quickly and more readily than that for A1. Is this because the total stimulus situation is easier to deal with because of a lessening of anxiety in relation to the psychologist; because the fear expressed in his behaviour and in the response to A1 has not been confirmed by the psychologist's behaviour? Is it due in part also to the clearer definition in the picture, and to the fact that it presents a two-person situation which is commonly seen as a heterosexual situation: in other words, the reality presented offers a hope of a relationship with women which was the main objective of his striving in the previous story?

He begins, *my first impression is of a rather old-fashioned sentiment*. Is this an expression of his hope of a particular kind of relation with women—a relationship which is old and enduring, one from which present anxieties are excluded? Is it also a way of emphasizing to the psychologist that the relationship he seeks with women is a harmless relationship, one of good feelings and sentiments, or an idealization based on his older feelings?

The response to A1 suggests that his main concern is to make a relationship with women. Now, presented with A2, he is in such a situation. How does he deal with it? He mentions *the girl* and *the man* and immediately goes on, *the middle makes me think of a church, but I can't see why it should make me think of this*. To ascribe a church to this area of the picture is unusual. He seeks justification



for his perception in the features of the stimulus but cannot find them. Why does he have to introduce the church? Does it represent some need within himself? In one aspect it is like a third person who is powerful, yet helpful, provided that religious precepts are observed, as distinct from the third person in A1, who is powerful yet forbidding. In another aspect it symbolizes a safe relation between the man and woman, an ideal sort of relation in which there is no chance of aggressive or other bad feelings entering in. In particular, sexual feelings are either to be excluded, or idealized and sanctified. *They are engaged in an exchange of confidences of an amorous nature.* He is very careful in the choice of words here, which seems to represent an attempt to keep feeling out of the situation. "Amorous confidences" are hardly appropriate in church. Any more direct expression of such feelings would be even more out of keeping with the situation.

The rest of the story seems to be an attempt to maintain this needed relationship with the woman. The story fluctuates between hope of achieving this and fear that loss and disaster will destroy the relationship. It is as if, as a part of the expectancy which determines his view of the situation, there is a feeling that inevitably he will lose this needed object or some other disaster will overtake it; he sees it as if there are sinister forces working against the relationship all the time. To reassure himself that these sinister forces do not exist in reality he examines the reality features of the picture presented in an attempt to find evidence of good: *life is suggested by the light in the middle and by the impression of stepping forward.* What does this sense of insecurity and tragedy mean? How can it be explained? This feeling that the good relation which he seeks to maintain as an old-fashioned sentiment, that is, probably, as an early dependent childlike relation, cannot be maintained. He cannot feel secure about it; it is bound to be lost in spite of his efforts to maintain the hope that it may be permanent. He says, *I think it will turn out very well, given their odd personalities, and again, no cataclysms like war and death.* Do these agencies which he ascribes to the external world really represent forces inside himself, uncontrollable forces which may destroy the ideal relationship; that is, turn it into a bad, dangerous relationship, as in phantasy he felt his infantile aggressive demands would destroy the good



relation he needed with his mother? Was this phantasy, which includes a sense of insecurity, and of inevitable loss, confirmed in reality when he was abandoned by his mother soon after his father's death and again when the mother herself died?

In attempting to describe the unconscious tension system which seems to dominate the patient's view of this situation it is possible only to make indirect inferences about the nature and strength of the unconscious wishes involved. The man and woman in the story are given little individuality. They are almost as it were the same person, as if the needed relationship involves moulding the object entirely to his needs. This would represent a very childlike dependent relationship; the self-centred demandingness implied in such a relationship, and indeed any expression of aggression, is completely denied. Any hope of maintaining a relationship with a woman seems to be incompatible with his making any positive demands upon her. That his passivity and his attempt to make a sentimental, ideal kind of relationship represents a denial of his underlying feelings is suggested by his inability to make the woman in the story different in any way from himself, for this implies that the unconscious wish is really to dominate the woman and to mould her to his infantile needs. His defensive efforts are more efficient in this story than, for example, in the story for A<sub>1</sub>, as in real life they would be in a situation where external reality tended to confirm his hope of a relationship with a woman rather than his fear of it being lost or forbidden. Even so, his perception of the social situation is still very largely in terms of his unconscious phantasy. The story produced suggests defensive competence rather than creative freedom and satisfaction. The characters introduced have little individuality of their own; there is no real interaction between them and no exchange of positive feeling. The solution given in the story represents an expression of hope only, which is precariously held against his anxieties and fears.

*Story C<sub>3</sub>*

7"—Comfort, material physical comfort, is my first impression. Then I thought of a half-hearted attempt at Christmas festivities;



the coloured balloon over the fire, but now I see it as a lamp. It is an attempt at Christmas festivities on the part of too few people. The woman on the left does not look festive at all. I don't get the impression of any marked emotion about this affair—perhaps of somnolence after a meal—faculties at low ebb—I can see the relics of the meal moved away. The woman on the left and the man in the armchair seem very drowsy, and the man standing up seems only just to be standing up. They all feel very warm and cosy and look forward to bed, and the emotional atmosphere is no more striking than that suggested by such remarks as, "Well, I suppose it's time we were off." The woman on the left, rather the morose and silent type, somewhat masculine. They'll all be off to bed in about ten minutes, I think. I feel there are things there I missed.

The first impression, *comfort, material physical comfort*, is the usual interpretation of the situation presented in this picture. A suggestion of warmth and liveliness is usually associated with the colour. The patient's first impression of this situation has something in common with his first response in the story given for the previous picture, A<sub>2</sub>, in that it suggests the need for and hope of good relations with other people. The presentation of C<sub>3</sub> is a challenge to satisfy his needs and enjoy satisfying them. But this first impression and anticipation of enjoyment is not maintained; *then I thought of a half-hearted attempt at Christmas festivities—the coloured balloon over the fire—but I now see it as a lamp*. This represents again a sudden damping down of feeling, a denial of the liveliness and possible activity in the situation. It is a denial of the possibility of active enjoyment, of allowing any strong feeling or interaction with others. This change in his view of the situation is associated with the red globe in the picture, which he had first thought of as a coloured balloon, then as a lamp. The interpretation of it as a coloured balloon would fit in with his general view of the picture as representing Christmas festivities. Such an interpretation would commit him to introducing lively activity into the scene. Is it for this reason that the interpretation is changed? The red globe is now seen as a lamp, which is a more noncommittal but logically quite acceptable interpretation of it. Does this



change of feeling associated with the red globe come about because the bright colour represents a possible danger in the situation? Does it represent the expression of strong feeling? Does he behave in this way in order to cut out this danger by excluding as much feeling as possible; the danger being that any feeling expressed might become too strong to be controlled? Since this is a three-person situation it may be that the strong feeling which is being denied has to do with heterosexual rivalry. There is no indication of such feeling, though it is inherent in the three-person stimulus situation presented. Why is it avoided? Why does he give no individuality to the man who is sitting with the woman? In so far as he is described he is at one with the woman. Is this because of the patient's need to deny a strong unconscious wish to separate them? Is this feeling displaced on to the red globe? Does this imply that any sexual rivalry with this man would inevitably lead to a loss of the needed dependent relation with the woman?

*It is an attempt at Christmas festivities on the part of too few people.* Perhaps this represents an attempt to rationalize the change in his interpretation of the situation, to justify his switch from the common view of it as a lively situation to one which is devoid of feeling. Does the comment also express his own dilemma that when he is faced with an intimate relation with people, that is when there are only a few present, he cannot allow feeling and activity to enter into the relationship?

He gives first attention to the woman on the left, *who does not look festive at all.* This figure in the picture also receives most attention later in the story. She appears to dominate the whole situation; the way she behaves determines the way he must behave and also the way the other man in the situation behaves.

*She is a morose masculine type of woman* who forbids enjoyment and festivity. The patient then goes on to deny again that he has any feelings about the situation. He must deny his angry feelings in relation to this woman who frustrates him; *I do not get the impression of any marked emotion in this affair; perhaps of somnolence after a meal—faculties at a low ebb—I can see the relics of the meal moved away.* He becomes passive; that he has had food must be taken as all he can expect. He must set his aspiration low; it must be governed by



what the woman is prepared to give. Does this mean that his underlying phantasy is that this woman who is dominant, morose, somewhat masculine, will not allow any other demands?

By this time his view of the picture and the social situation he has put upon it has completely changed. He sees now *the woman on the left and the man in the armchair are very drowsy, and the man standing up seems to be only just standing up*. The drowsiness, "faculties at low ebb" and the partial impotence of the central figure ensure that there shall be no strong expression of feeling either of enjoyment or anger in the situation, and this apparently because of the fear of the dominant woman.

The emphasis on oral gratifications and on the woman suggests that he is falling back upon a passive dependent relation with the woman as the only possible one he can maintain; active demands, particularly sexual demands and rivalry, are dangerous and must be given up, as the price of maintaining the needed dependent relationship. The main consequence of a more active relationship would, in phantasy, result in this needed object becoming a bad, forbidding and possibly retaliating woman. He can avoid these consequences and yet maintain the needed dependent relationship only by a massive denial of his unconscious needs. This process is responsible for the change in his perception of the picture.

The end comment, *I feel there are things I missed*, is an apology and an excuse for his effort at a conscious defensive level. At a deeper level may it not be a concrete expression of his frustration in the situation he has described? In the previous story he was in possession of the woman; this story represents a retreat from that position.

The unconscious needed relationship may be inferred as an oral demanding and destructive relationship, and also a sexual aggressive relationship. As a consequence of these destructive wishes he fears retaliation by a dominating masculine woman, and also loss of the basic security and comfort which he needs. This fear is similarly shown in response to A1—a fear that the good, satisfying woman will turn into a bad, forbidding woman and a persecuting figure. In order to guard against these possibilities he must avoid making any demands or show of feeling in his relations with a woman. He must be passive and accept a low level of gratification.



He must deny any aggressive self-centred intention and in particular he must deny any sexual wishes, or any rivalry with the other man. May it be that any sexual relationship will not only bring punishment from this masculine forbidding woman, but that the strong feelings which would arise in such a relationship would arouse also deeper angers and destructive impulses in relation to this frustrating woman, and that she would reject him?

The perception of the picture, the structure of the story, as well as the outcome, are dominated by the defensive efforts of the patient. All his effort goes in avoiding the disasters which in his phantasy would result if the nature of his unconscious wishes were revealed. There is little left of his resources for him to make any free or positive relation with others.

### *Story B<sub>3</sub>*

10"—My first impression is of a stylized Greek tragedy. That mainly arises from the shapes of the figures and the very clear cut lines of the masonry. The impression I get is that everything—feelings—is being cut down to their essentials. No time will be wasted on anything that doesn't matter. Only concerned with life and death and love. There are two figures on the right—I think it's two—certainly one (sigh) observing a couple in the background—not I think in a hostile way. That's merely the effect of the dark figure being too much revealed, i.e. she's not in hiding in any way. There is a young woman and a man, of course, maybe ten years older who has an important job on the Acropolis. The dark figure on the right could be the girl's mother with someone else alongside her (finger to mouth)—some other elderly person, maybe an aunt. There is a general sense of something very weighty, almost of tragedy over the whole house—or household. But it will all be taken very bravely indeed—no hysteria, not much weeping. Taken in the manner of the stolid, but thorough, manner of the educated Greeks. Some great principle is at stake and probably two of the people have to suffer for its sake. The people in the shadow are looking on at the others who are more actively engaged in whatever the struggle is—looking on sorrowfully but with goodwill.



I feel it must turn out tragically, but with the people involved recognizing their destiny and seeing themselves as not just small humans but as personifications of whatever the principles are.

The social situation presented in the picture is similar to that in the preceding picture in that it is a three-person situation. The more definite reality content and the dark shading probably increase the feeling of threat within the situation, and his first impression is of tragedy in contrast to his first impression of A<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>, where the hope of good relations was a part of the first reaction. The reality content and context presented is used decisively to deal with the anxiety arising from the threat of tragedy and loss. The setting of his stage, as a stylized Greek tragedy situation, represents a stern denial of feeling bolstered by very efficient intellectual defences. The situation is one in which the issues are life and death and love, probably a life and death struggle in which the stake is satisfaction of affectional needs. This is an 'all or nothing' pattern of response, typifying very early object relationships, where there are no in-between feelings, only love and hate. These feelings are too powerful and dangerous to be involved in real relationships; they can be enacted only at a great distance with full assurances of control as in Greek tragedy. The identification with the characters of Greek tragedy shows the patient's need to adopt a masochistic idealistic role for himself both as a way of avoiding destruction—probably disintegration—from the destructive forces within, and also to preserve a picture of himself which he can consciously accept.

Two figures on the right are seen where it is usual to see only one. This indicates a split in the internalized woman object as seen also in A<sub>1</sub> and A<sub>2</sub>—probably also paranoid projection of the bad aspect of the internal object by the side of the good one. As in the previous card these aspects are not clearly separated. He shows a most careful and effective control of these projected feelings of hostility and suspicion by detailed use of the reality content of the picture. This denial of feeling in a situation in which a man and woman are seen together in a life and death struggle is probably a way of dealing with his anxiety about the inevitable destructive



nature of their relationship, for his own unconscious wished-for relationship with the woman is also destructive.

The main concern is with the women in the situation. Either as victim or observer he must maintain rigid control of feelings to preserve some great principle, i.e. he must accept deprivation, tragedy, loss of object, without any show of anger or any strong expression of feeling in order to maintain the illusion of preserving something of supreme importance—an ideal object. From another point of view it is probable that he must maintain this masochistic relationship to preserve himself as a whole person, this being the only way to deal with forces which he feels uncontrollable both inside and outside himself.

This attitude of masochistic self-righteousness and idealism describes the relationship which the psychologist felt was being established with him during the interview. It serves the purpose of covering effectively the underlying aggressive demanding relationships, while justifying all the time the need for a dependent ideal relation.

The defences in this situation are extremely tightly woven. That the degree of tension is very strong is revealed in both the content and formal aspects of the story. As in previous stories, there is little interaction between the people and little development of them as individuals. Passivity is the predominant role.

### *Story AG*

12"—A flight of steps—three main figures in the foreground left and the three minor ones who are members of an official body—army or secret police, in the background on the right. I get the impression of waiting. The three main figures are certainly booked for some unpleasant experience; the three minor ones are going to impose that experience without any real joy in what they are about to do. They too are victims of a system, but a different kind of victim. There is no strong animosity to the three main figures; not perhaps 100 percent determination to carry out whatever their duties will be. But as the three main figures are bowed and despondent, I don't feel they are of the type to enlist what is left of conscience in the others to bring about any mitigation of what might be before them.



The step-like arrangement doesn't mean anything—nor the light above it except as a piece of scenery. The two large lighted shapes on the ground I can't identify. Again everyone is waiting, waiting for the machine to take another turn and bring them round to the moment when it's ready to deal with them.

It turns out unhappily (sorry to be such —). I am reminded of the sort of situation which occurred in German-occupied countries where the members of a sub-race fell into the hands of masters. Many were not in accord with the masters, but they machined-gunned *all* of them. They seem to be heading for one form of extinction or another, and so do the three minor figures, at a later date.

The perception of the social situation in the picture as two groups of three people is usual. He is not able to give any definite setting for the events. The perception of the step-like arrangements is not uncommon, though his statement that it does not mean anything to him may be a denial of a phantasy linking the two groups (e.g. possibly a sexual phantasy). The ability to use the reality content and context as a part of the defensive effort is less marked than in previous stories.

This picture commonly reveals the subject's ways of dealing with depressive phantasies. In this instance a futile-depressive situation is superimposed on the stimulus situation and there are marked persecutory phantasies as a part of the system. In this story, perhaps, even more sharply than in previous ones, the lack of aggression expressed, and the attempt to keep out all feeling, contrasts with the tragedy and destruction in the content.

In many respects this is a continuation or variation on the theme of the previous story: inevitable destruction (of self, of object, of family) by the dictates of external impersonal forces. The only way for him to deal with the depressive situation is to put the responsibility for the destruction outside himself. The flat, futile tone of the story reflects the hopelessness of resolving the tension system by any action on his part.

On the surface he expects the world to persecute him, to treat him impersonally as of little value. He is passive, despondent,

unable to seek compassion, perhaps unable to believe it could be given. In unconscious terms he is afraid to seek an affectionate relationship because he cannot keep separate from it primitive destructive relationships. This is typified in his characterization of the two groups of three figures which represent these two parts of himself—an ineffective splitting mechanism.

From another point of view the sexual content of his phantasy in this story, denied in the reference to the stairway, represents a dominant and very much feared aspect of the two-person relationship portrayed (using the two groups of three as a two-person situation—a multiple defence which provides anonymity). Such a defence suggests an almost depersonalized role, a disclaiming of all responsibility and real involvement. The inability to differentiate between the persecutor and persecuted in this context represents an inability to distinguish his role in the relationship as destroyer or destroyed. The passivity probably indicates an unconscious passive homosexual role.

The characterization of this dynamic system is not clear in the story. The repeated emphasis on the absence of *animosity* and lack of *joy* in carrying out the destruction probably implies that he must control by denying a manic pleasure in destroying his object, but equally as a victim he must control all anger against his persecutors.

Intellectual control is less strong but still effective in this story, though the defences are less well woven. At the end of the story he is able to rationalize his persecutory feelings by reference to real external situations in which similar events happened.

### Story B1

8"—This one makes a call on pure imagination more than the others. It stimulates me more easily to make a little story, but a technical exercise rather than putting together emotional impressions.

There is a girl on the bed on the left—she's rather untidy as she has left the bedclothes on the rail. Some people feel it a little shocking—she leaves the door open, but perhaps they live on the top where no-one else lives.



There is a man on the stairs going up—may be going down and that changes the whole thing.

Probably he has been working—he and the girl live together. He will hear her say, "Hullo darling." She'll tell him whatever news—he'll remark that she's gone to bed early—she's very lazy. She'll agree. He'll bustle about talking and getting himself something to eat. She'll talk back. Oh, he'll have had to put the light on. After he's had something to eat, he'll get undressed and he'll get into bed and believe that they'll sleep comfortably and undisturbed—all domestic—no passion—doesn't make any demand on either of them. They're used to each other, accustomed. They like each other but are not living on any rarified plane of feeling. It's all rather cosy and domestic.

The immediate situation can hardly be said to turn out at all. Both wake up feeling as before. Quietly satisfied with each other. In the long run I can't decide whether they'll make the relationship more permanent, or whether one or both will become attracted elsewhere, without harsh feelings, and take leave of the erstwhile partner.

I can see other interpretations but only intellectually. May live alone and be going to buy cigarettes—or may merely have visited the girl on the left who is a prostitute and be on his way down—in that case I'm sure she'd make him shut the door.

The clearer definition of the object-relations situation and the more conventional and more detailed reality content is in one sense a relief, following AG, one of the most vague and difficult pictures. These reality features help him to deal with a situation in which he feels a direct challenge to reveal unconscious phantasies about sexual relations. In the transference relationship with the psychologist the suspicions which this challenge evokes are dealt with first by denial of the reality of the situation; it is *pure imagination*. This technique of defence is reinforced by making the story impersonal as a *technical exercise*, which is another way of denying his emotional involvement in it. Thereafter the patient builds up the story with more ease, but he gives a great deal of attention to detail in building up the sequence of events and in using the content of the stimulus situation; he sees all the



possibilities of the situation intellectually. It is probable that he is dealing with his paranoid fears in relation to the psychologist by these means.

His attention is first given to the bed, and he introduces a second person into the picture, which is not usual. This indicates the strength of the dominant tension system and reveals the sexual content. He puts on to the woman his own defensive need for control and for keeping sexual feelings and relationships hidden. He is uncertain how to deal with the woman. The recognition of the possibility of the man going down reveals his extreme caution and suspiciousness in the situation.

This is the first story in which there is interaction between the people. The interaction is superficial and the attention is given to the detail of the individual's activity. Superficially, it is an easy, Bohemian atmosphere. In actuality, the relationship is one in which there must be no demands from either upon the other, no deep affectional ties, i.e. an avoidance of any sexual aggression which is shown by his insistence on *no passion*. The relationship described in the story probably represents also his avoidance of becoming dependent, of taking the responsibility, of getting emotionally involved, because of the feared consequences of a relationship in which his primitive unconscious wishes might be acted out. He keeps open the possibility of breaking the relationship, again without there being any anger expressed by either one of them. A gleam of humour at the end covers his contempt of women and fear of their dominance and control over him. The apposition of buying cigarettes and having a prostitute suggests the oral character of his sexual relationship, which can only be acted out safely in a commercial, non-emotional activity.

The nature of the unconscious object relations is well covered in this situation. The need for a passive dependent relation in which no demands are made upon him is probably showing through the content of the story. The nature of these unconscious demands may only be inferred from the unusual treatment of the picture situation, and the kind of defences shown.

This is a longer story than previous ones. It is well constructed and well organized. It is an extremely defensive piece of work which is still successful in producing a superficial impression of



competence, of lack of concern, and detachment. There is a good deal more interaction between the characters, and again at a superficial level, more individuality is given to them. Defences by denial and intellectualization are particularly strong and effective. External reality is more clearly separated from the internal world.

### Story Cg

10"—I don't get much out of this. The threat to me is in the shadow on the steps and indignation and violence in the figure in the foreground, the figure with the arm raised. I get the impression of some injustice that has been perpetrated on the group of people in the foreground who are more or less resigned to it except for the one on the right. The shadow on the top of the steps represents some kind of perverse authority. I feel that the threat represented by the shadow will be made good; the figures in the foreground are too resigned and abject for anything else to happen. The length of the flight of stairs somehow lends authority to the shadow on the top of the stairs.

The first comment is clearly an attempt at denial which is belied in the underlying intensity of the situation described. The perception and general interpretation of the picture is usual. What is unusual is the intensity and violence of the feelings introduced, the amount of persecutory anxiety and the extreme passivity of the victims.

The threat in the situation is probably intensified by this very strong and real challenge from authority being presented after B<sub>1</sub>, where paranoid anxieties relating to unconscious sexual wishes were particularly stirred. The phantasy content of the tension system imposed on the present picture is similar to that projected in previous stories, in particular B<sub>3</sub> and AG. This includes a projection out upon authority in the external world of unconscious object relations which were phantasied as perversely dominating and persecutory. The *violence and indignation* felt in response to such persecution is controlled; only passive resignation is possible in face of such overwhelming threats. (The use of the words *perverse authority* may be a reference to sadomasochistic homosexual phantasies which are deeply repressed.)



Probably the threat is to be understood in terms of the danger of losing control of his unconscious destructive impulses, for any expression of them would bring retaliation in kind; it would not be possible to keep separate the internal and external world. The preservation of the ego is at stake and this may only be attained by passivity.

This is a comparatively brief story; as a piece of work it is carefully expressed. The intense feeling implied in the content is strictly controlled. The story is told in a detached way as if the reality of the issues as applying to the patient is split off and denied. There is no development of the situation in terms of interaction between the characters and no individuality is given them; they are portrayed almost as personifications of abstract forces rather than real figures. The end situation is one of masochistic resignation, and there is a general tone of futility about it.

### Story A<sub>3</sub>

5"—Offhand, these figures make me think of the busts that one sees in large gardens—dressmaker's dummies. I'm afraid they don't seem frightfully human—rather like three disembodied spirits wandering around in a dream. The only feeling I get out of the figures is one of a somewhat high degree of exclusion applied to the figure on the left—that is he's excluded from whatever holds together the other two. I don't feel clearly how it might turn out. I think that's mainly because the figures are not sufficiently human—the feelings they represent are not sufficiently positive—wraiths in a dream sequence.

This is a quick response. The use of the word *offhand* suggests that he is trying to remain only superficially involved; it provides also an excuse for any slips which result from a more impulsive start with the story. This comparatively quick reaction to the situation must relate both to the matching qualities of the stimulus with the tension system, and to the content and intensity of the previous story. The use of the word *busts* to describe the figures, which is unusual, and the somewhat incongruous setting ascribed to them, shows the primitive oral dependence in the needed relationship. The offhand façade and the inability to see the



figures in more life-like human form is part of the patient's attempt to deny the reality of these wishes. The three-person situation presented is probably particularly dangerous for any expression of such needs, for it involves rivalry with authority, a position which was experienced as completely untenable in the previous story, and in C<sub>3</sub>. To see the figures as busts is a most effective way of avoiding any such rivalry situation.

Object relations in a three-person situation involve the phantasy of being excluded from the parent relationship. The oral gratifications which are at stake—although the relationship involves sexual rivalry also—are so important for him that any feelings resulting from rivalry and frustration must be controlled. The absence of reality content probably makes it more difficult to give more life to the situation, for it provides little in the way of defensive material. At the same time the reality context in terms of light shading probably intensifies the need for a dependent relationship. The very decisive method of keeping feeling out of the situation, shown in his unusual perception of the figures as busts, indicates the intensity of the underlying wishes which are thereby denied.

It is possible that in this story there is an instance of close match between the unconscious tension system and the stimulus situation, and that the tension in the system is particularly strong. The only possible method of defence at the patient's disposal is to deny the reality of the situation or, in other words, to deny that he has such unconscious needs and anxieties.

This again is a briefer story with little or no individuality given to the people in it and no interaction described. The outcome is uncertain, and the lack of definition and the uncertainty in the stimulus is blamed. This emphasizes the patient's dependence upon others for his security, or, from another viewpoint, it shows the lack of early secure relations with people, which as consciously validated experience would form the basis of later secure relations with the external world, even though it offers little security in itself.

Nevertheless the fact that this three-person rivalry situation can be put out on to external reality at all, after the previous story, suggests there is some hope of solution remaining within the



individual. It is probably a positive indication prognostically when evaluated in the context of the hopeless, futile outcomes in previous stories.

### *Story B<sub>2</sub>*

50"—A nocturnal and probably an illicit meeting under a tree. One at least of them I suppose shouldn't be there. One I take to be a girl or woman somewhat shorter than the figure actually leaning against the tree (bites finger). I don't get any tragic or even any highly dramatic feeling out of this. The meeting is to me an escapade, not more. That is, I can't feel that the opportunities of seeing each other which one of them at least must make will be very strong, or that it will adopt very drastic means. I feel it will turn out as happily as most human affairs do.

This is the second longest reaction time—between three and four times as long as any apart from that for the first story—and it is one of the shortest stories. It is probable that this is due partly to the threat in the heterosexual situation presented, increased by the clear definition. The darkness of the picture may also stimulate anxiety, as may the reality content, in particular the house, which is not mentioned in the story.

The link with the previous story is clear. In that situation he felt excluded from a relationship which the parents share, more specifically from a relationship with the mother. There the primitive oral demands and the sexual demands were denied, and the rivalry with authority avoided. In the present situation he is faced with a direct challenge to make a heterosexual relationship. The consciousness of the forbidding, threatening authority appears to be dominant; it is referred to at the beginning of the story. The presence of this authority, usually associated with the house or the black shadow in the picture, is not mentioned, probably because the threat as a reality cannot be dealt with at all.

Perceptually the two-person situation is probably seen as a three-person situation. In the conscious response, the house and the black shadow of the tree are probably avoided because they represent a feared authority which will forbid and punish him for heterosexual wishes. These are denied, and the fear of authority



in this situation is so strong that external reality which might represent this threat is also avoided. The overwhelming fear is probably a reason why the passive homosexual relationship shown in CG and earlier stories must be accepted so resignedly.

The main defence is again a system of denial, a denial of real involvement in the situation, of any serious intent (sexual demands), of any permanence in the relationship; e.g. it is only an *escapade*. The threatened consequences are likewise dealt with by denial; it is not possible to contemplate any *drastic means* to get the relationship required, i.e. to deal with the rivalry situation; the inevitable tragic and dramatic consequences of rivalry, probably also of primitive aggressive relations with the woman as such, are set aside.

From this story by itself it is clear that for the patient sexual relations must be secret stolen affairs, which implies a fear of authority and of discovery. The more precise understanding of the nature of the unconscious needed relationship, and the consequent anxieties, can be inferred from the sequence of the stories. The intensity of the dynamic system can be measured in terms of the long reaction time, the brevity of the story and the nature and organization of the defences. There is some attempt to cover the mood of pessimism at the end of the story with a façade of cynicism.

It is probable that the patient's avoidance of the house and tree in the picture is also an attempt to hide his feelings of intense fear and suspicion transferred upon the psychologist in the situation. These feelings have come nearer to the surface since B1.

### Story BG

12"—This made me feel first of a school. The sense I get is that the figures are immature, not adult—undersized. Obviously someone is going to be sent to Coventry. The figure standing alone has outraged some important law of the group, he feels very sorry for himself. He's withdrawn and made himself smaller, but he's miserable rather than fearful (soft voice, deferential, very serious, rather tight-lipped). The style of architecture in the picture and the long causeway in which people study, heightens the feelings that exist in the group and between them



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and the individual. There's a strong feeling of loneliness. I feel that the single individual has offended through really a lack of feeling for whatever law he broke, rather than a deliberate wish to break it and that he's a chronically lonely type and likely to remain so—always likely to live and feel alone.

The setting ascribed is a school and all the figures are seen as children. This is sufficiently unusual to make it clearly a projection of his own feelings of inadequacy and immaturity.

The unusual use of the word *feel* in the first sentence suggests a strong emotional response. Is this use of the word a concrete expression of strong feeling evoked by a stimulus which matches an important emotionally charged experience in the past?

The rejection theme carried forward from A<sub>3</sub> through the previous story is now dealt with in a different social setting. The role of the child, and the disclaiming of responsibility, result in a defenceless pleading kind of relationship. This is also the relationship with the psychologist in the test situation.

The patient's main concern is for the consequences of his behaviour upon himself; there is little concern for its effects upon the group. The use of the word *outraged* is somewhat out of context and is probably a concrete intrusion characterizing the unconscious dynamic involved. To deal with the fear and anxiety consequences of the destructiveness he must appear small, miserable, and defenceless. He remains chronically lonely as the only possible outcome. This is the only way to disclaim real responsibility for wishes which, in phantasy, inevitably brings rejection by the group, and also to avoid any stimulation of the unconscious aggressive intentions and the guilty feelings which go with them. Even so, the anxiety remains that there is nothing good within him to win back the regard of others, that there are only bad, destructive feelings which are uncontrollable inside himself; and equally there is nothing but persecution and rejection to be expected of others.

Probably some indication of the nature of the unconscious phantasies involved in this situation may be seen by taking the reference to being sent to Coventry, breaking laws of the group,



outraging the group and society, as references to sexual wishes. The loneliness and intention to live and feel alone is the only solution (in a latency situation) where heterosexual and homosexual wishes are forbidden any outlet, and in unconscious terms, equally result in the threat of castration. This fear is externalized here in the social prohibition and threat implied.

The attention to the detail of the reality content half-way through the story is probably an attempt to objectify his persecutory anxieties, as in CG distance intensifies the feeling of separateness and hostility from others. This attention to the detail of the picture may be also an attempt to put the responsibility for the rejection outside himself.

As in nearly all the other stories there is no interaction between the people in the situation and little individuality is given to them. The stimulus situation is structured to fit the offensive-defensive needs of his tension system. Even so the story is a well organized and very carefully expressed piece of work. The outcome is one of pessimism, with a masochistic acceptance of his rejection and of himself as conditions which cannot be changed.

### *Story C2*

10"—It made me think first of a hospital, because I'm sure a hospital uses brass bedsteads except perhaps some private wards. Something matronly about the figure on the right. I next thought of a boarding- or lodging-house keeper who has come down somewhat in the world and she appears to me to be in a dressing gown which suggests she's rather a slovenly type, if she does her day's work in it, I mean. The bed is not made up to me, I can see a mattress and overlay at the side. If she is a boarding-house keeper, she's going into the room to precipitate some trouble. I feel there's someone in the room who is weaker than she—perhaps he's vacated the room. I feel the situation will end by their being thrown out of the house in some sinister way—which works out her position of strength and theirs of weakness.

The interpretation of the setting as a hospital is not frequently given as a response to this picture. This interpretation, with the

reference to a bright colour detail which is rather weakly rationalized, suggests that this is a compulsive response expressing an unconscious phantasy. The sequence from the previous story makes it probable that this phantasy included the need for a dependent relation with a woman, a relation which gives ease and security and which is reparative after his rejection by the group in BG. The lack of aggression, denial of bad intentions and the role of the object child in BG makes possible this new attempt to make such a relationship. But the angry persecuted feelings which result from the frustration of this primitive need inevitably destroy the possibility of maintaining such a good relation. The woman who by her position as matron in a hospital should be a good "mother", in phantasy inevitably becomes a bad, persecuting, rejecting woman. It is as if any woman who is in control, that is upon whom he becomes dependent, in his phantasy turns into a potential persecutor. If she is so completely in control, like a matron, then there is no possibility of escape, or of expressing any of the anger and contempt he feels for such a woman; neither is there the possibility of gratifying his primitive needs.

To be completely under the control of such an object in a situation from which there is no escape is too dangerous. He must get control into his own hands. He must, therefore, reject first, and must avoid getting involved in a situation in which he is under the control of a woman.

In the second situation, in the lodging-house, the phantasy of the woman as a bad rejecting object still dominates the patient's interpretation of the picture. Now she is an object of contempt and criticism. The angry, resentful feelings in response to her neglect of her responsibilities to others, and her ruthless exercise of her power in rejecting others, are implied, and indirectly expressed. But a passive acceptance of this persecution by women is all that is possible. The change in the setting from hospital to lodging-house does not represent a change in the basic relationship with this bad object, but there is not the same dependence, or the same intimate involvement with the woman in the second situation. The change, therefore, represents a denial of the need for a dependent relationship.

In summary: the tension system imposed on this stimulus



situation is characterized by a fear of being dominated by a woman, for she is fantasied as a ruthless trouble-maker and rejecter. To be dependent upon such a bad object must be avoided because the primitive anger which would be evoked by her neglect and rejection would be uncontrollable and destroy the needed good aspects of the object: it would also lay the patient open to retaliation in kind from this strong sinister authority, who has the characteristics of male authority—a "phallic woman". The only relation possible is a passive one as seen so frequently in previous stories.

After the first sentence the story is well woven and the expression is carefully controlled. The individuality given to the woman character is predominantly in terms of the patient's fantasies. There is no interaction between the characters, indeed the presence of the second person is implied but not specifically described. The outcome is negative, a passive acceptance of aggression and rejection from external objects, in particular from women.

### *Story C<sub>1</sub>*

7"—But for the sink a very cosy domestic interior. The emotional content of the picture lies in the shadow at the window which I felt was not that of the housewife going shopping, but which I felt was somehow ominous. Someone, or probably two someones, have recently finished a meal and I feel that the shadow in the window represents a threat to the security of what is inside—the flower and jug, the spoon and plate and so on. It might be the shadow, for instance, of a malevolent village gossip. It's a she to me by the way, this shadow. I don't feel that the threat is strong enough to be bound to break up what the room represents, though she can subject the people who belong inside to a great deal of misery.

As in the previous story, C<sub>2</sub>, and also in response to one of the two earlier coloured pictures, C<sub>3</sub>, the first impulse appears to be towards warm, probably dependent, relationships. Almost immediately, as in C<sub>2</sub> and C<sub>3</sub> also, the perception of the situation is changed to one in which a bad object dominates the scene. The popular perception of the situation is not maintained, even where



the stimulus situation provides evidence of warmth and good relations (perhaps the more so because of this) because of conflicting object relations inside the individual which are put out upon the external world—threatening, persecuting relations.

As expressed, the feeling of threat is first related to an object in the physical environment, *the sink*, which is at once a way of putting the threat outside himself, but also indicating that the feeling arises from the dangerous apposition of the good phantasy object with something symbolizing bodily functions and needs. In other words bodily needs make impossible a good *cosy domestic* relationship. This is probably because at a primitive level they are destructive and turn the good object into a bad persecuting object.

The threat is then seen at the window; it is seen as a woman, which is not usual, particularly when the figure at the window is regarded as sinister. It is the bad internalized woman object that is felt to be threatening his relations with the good internalized object. The nature of the relationship which is being threatened is only indicated at a distance, symbolically, a man-woman relationship expressed in terms of flower-jug, spoon-plate. No attention is given to the many other objects in the reality content of the stimulus. Probably both oral and sexual demands are indicated in this symbolism. But whatever the nature of these primitive wishes, their gratification is threatened by a forbidding trouble-maker, a persecuting woman. It is as if any effort to make a warm, intimate relation with a woman inevitably results in the phantasied good object becoming quickly and completely a phantasied bad, persecuting object as in previous stories, e.g. C2. In terms of the transference relationship with the psychologist it is, of course, the psychologist looking in at his window, and this anxiety is dealt with by making the figure a woman, an unusual perception.

In dealing with this stimulus situation the patient pays attention to the perceptual field, structuring it, by selection of details and emphasis upon them, to fit the offensive-defensive components of the dominant tension system. Considerable repression and denial results in only a distant symbolic representation of the unconscious needs and phantasied relations with the object; the feared consequences of such a relationship are shown in the



external threat which is a projection of a retaliating and frustrating phantasy object, and the defences are shown in the denial of needs and also of the feared consequences.

While superficially the patient's perception of the stimulus is congruous with what is presented, the selection of the parts used, their emphasis and the meanings attached to them are predominantly in terms of his unconscious tensions. Little individuality is given to external reality in its own right, there is little interaction between the individual and the external world except as defensive measures. In this situation the hope of a good constructive relation surviving the persecutory threats is just maintained. That this hope is stronger than in any other story suggests that the stimulus situation, including the reality content and the reality context, provides more security and reassurance than do the other pictures. The normative data give some support to such a hypothesis.

### *Story Blank*

10"—(Smiles in somewhat confidential yet furtive manner.)

There is a large figure in the centre of this card—male, I think—the figure is seen down to the waist, facing me—in its face there is violence and anger and some element of misery and unhappiness. It's a little bit like an ape, a gorilla, because its passions, whatever it's feeling at the moment, have so distorted its face. It seemed to be reproaching me angrily and yet with some unhappiness. The rest of the figure seemed to be cut off by a window sill or the table which it was leaning against slightly and bending forward from. There wasn't anything round it—it just occupied the card by itself. I've stuck to my first impression—it was only, only momentary. (Deferential, very serious, almost reverent tone of voice.)

Before giving this story the patient looked at the psychologist with a smile which at the time was noted as partly confidential and partly furtive. The attitude adopted in giving the response also suggested deference, and the tone of voice a reverent pleading. It seemed that the patient felt that his behaviour was a challenge to the psychologist, yet at the same time there was



sufficient confidence in the goodness of the relationship for the challenge to be made. The hope of making a relationship which does not inevitably lead to rejection and retaliation is carried forward from the end of the previous story, and the expression of this momentary picture of himself is an attempt to test out the reality of this feeling. It is probable that the patient had built up a phantasy of an ideal relation with the psychologist; that he could maintain the illusion that the psychologist could remain completely cut off from and unaffected by the selfish destructive phantasies inside himself. Equally he can retain the illusion that these passions and angry resentments can be kept separate from his own ideal self.

The treatment of the situation is unusual in that the image put on to the blank card is not only clearly seen, but is given the attributes of reality as distinct from an imaginary picture. It is a projection of himself, his wild animal-like passions and his misery and unhappiness. These feelings are also put out upon his relations with the psychologist: the anticipation of anger and violent persecution, by the side of a phantasy of some positive relation based upon compassion. In one aspect the story is a plea for help from the psychologist; for help to deal with this animal-like figure which distorts his face and prevents him from having a trustful relation with people.

The picture he puts on to the blank card is unusual in other respects which require explanation. First that it is a picture of himself, a narcissistic performance, secondly that it is cut off at the waist (and this is emphasized in his description of the picture he sees). The evidence in previous stories supports the hypothesis that this is a protective device, a protection against inevitable castration which he fears as a consequence of revealing his primitive violence and demandingness. On the surface he attempts to ward off this threat by a placatory and propitiating attitude to the psychologist as he tells his story. In making the picture he takes more decisive avoiding action by castrating himself first, as it were, presenting only the top half of the body. A passive homosexual relationship with the psychologist is too dangerous: only a passive, detached, idealized sort of relation is possible.

As is frequently the case in this test the sequence through the



earlier pictures leads to an expression of the patient's dominant tension system, and the most acceptable method of solution, expressed in relation to the psychologist in the story to the blank card.

As in previous stories the organization of this piece of work and the expression is carefully and effectively controlled. This façade (by contrast with his real competence in dealing with people as revealed in the stories, it shows little in the way of really effective achievement), seems to represent a narcissistic illusion of omnipotence, a basic and essential part of his defensive mechanisms. By this means not only can he maintain the illusion that he is indestructible in face of any threat or deprivation, but he can also assure himself of his own goodness, and as it were rationalize his distorted view of external reality and of his relations with others.

#### *A schematic summary of each story*

It is now possible to review the evidence provided in this sequence analysis in an attempt to describe the dominant tension systems which the patient superimposes upon the stimulus situation in his effort to obtain relief of tension, while still conforming with the reality demands in the picture stimulus and the clinical situation. This dynamic process may be summarized by reference to three main features of the patient's behaviour:

1. *The kind of people he projects on to the human figures in the pictures, and the roles they are given.* Under this heading are recorded not only the main features of the characters as described in the stories, but also those which are inferred in the sequence analysis.

In addition a note is made of the kind of activity actually ascribed to each character. In the present example this information is recorded in parentheses after the description of each character.

2. *A description of the main unconscious tension system.* This is summarized in terms of the three-phase process previously discussed, i.e.

- (a) The unconscious phantasy relations which are sought as a result of frustrations experienced in satisfying primitive biological needs, including those which arise at early important stages of maturation:

(b) Feared consequences which are phantasied as the result of these aggressive wishes.

(c) The defensive efforts which are made to avoid facing these consequences and the anxieties related to them.

From the evidence accumulated in the sequence analysis some judgements can be made about the strength and quality of the dynamics operating in each of these phases. Such judgements are given in parenthesis in the following summaries. From them it will be possible to make assessments concerning the strength of the tension, its quality in terms of the level of biological development from which it springs, and the spread of the tension system, i.e. the extent to which it dominates the patient's view of objective reality.

3. *Outcome behaviour*. Under this heading is summarized the behaviour, mainly in terms of interpersonal relations, which results from the total dynamic process described in 1 and 2 above. The evidence recorded in the sequence analysis, in which both the content and more formal aspects of behaviour were considered, should be re-checked against the dynamic picture produced in this summary. Finally the internal consistency of the summary should be re-examined.

One example of such a schematic summary is given below:

#### PICTURE AI (PRESENTATION I)

##### 1. *Characters and roles projected on to figures in the picture*

- (a) Man: passive, placatory, hyper-vigilant, afraid: underlying bitterness and futility (morose contemplation).
- (b) Woman: young, despondent, poignant feelings, idealized (no activity).
- (c) Woman: middle-aged, dark clothes, threatening (gazing at the man).

##### 2. *Description of main tension system*

- (a) Unconscious wished-for relationships
  - ? { Infantile-demanding
  - Sexual-aggressive
  - (aggression: crude sadistic?)



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### (b) Feared consequences

- { Loss of object
- { Retaliation by forbidding woman
- (fear: extremely strong)

### (c) Defensive relationships

Splitting of good and bad aspects of object—fails:  
Idealization; paranoid projection:  
Denial of sexual aggressive wishes:  
Passivity, bitter conformity:  
Inhibition of feeling, intellectualization  
(defences: well woven, and extremely strong.  
Very large part of total effort used).

### 3. Outcome behaviour

Doubt whether he can make a relation with any woman.

Avoidance of relations, of getting involved with women except at a superficial level. Compulsive need to keep some relation with women and to try to solve this dilemma.

? Impotence.

Placatory, passive, detached; full of good sentiment and ideals. Underlying bitterness and cynicism.

Will try to control others, particularly women, by his negative behaviour, denying this intention, however, in his surface behaviour. In his achievements will make only a superficial show of competence in situations where his real feelings are involved. Extreme sensitivity and carefulness in relations with others.

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF MAIN FINDINGS

The findings from the analysis of the patient's responses to the twelve pictures and the blank card may be discussed under the main headings used in making a schematic summary for each story as illustrated in the previous pages. The three questions to be asked are:

1. How does he people his world: how does he perceive social situations in which he is challenged to play a part?

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2. Why does he perceive social situations in the way he does: what are the unconscious and conscious dynamics which determine his perception of the social situations presented?

3. What kind of behaviour in various social situations will result from the way he sees them?

## 1. How does he people his world?

In the table which follows the persons seen in the pictures, or introduced into the social situations which the patient makes from the pictures, are briefly characterized in terms of the main feelings and roles given to them. Across the table left to right are tabulations from the stories given in response to one-person, two-person, three-person and group pictures for the A series. Underneath those from the B and C series are given. The order of presentation is indicated in the top right-hand corner of each box. The sex ascribed to the persons is noted: M (male), F (female), O (not specified). The dominant feature of the relationship between the persons in the story is also described under the dotted line in each box.

TABLE I

*Characters and roles projected on to the pictures*

Social Situation Presented

1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	Group
(1)	(2)	(8)	(5)
A. M.1. Passive, afraid, hopeless	M.1. Passive, tragic, insecure, introverted	O.1. ("bust" or spirit) excluded	M.1. Passive victim, despondent, hopeless
F.2. Idealized, despondent	F.2. Idealized, tragic, insecure, introverted	O.2. {"bust" or spirit) O.3. {excluding	M.2. Persecuting, ruthless agents
F.3. Threatening			



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	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	Group
	Morose contem- plation	Amorous confid- ences (detached)	Contem- plation (very de- tached)	Await destruction/ destroy
	(6)	(9)	(4)	(10)
B.	M.I. Detached, bohemian, united, contempt of women	M.I. Secretly rebellious, passive, helpless	F.I. Passive, sad, con- trolled, (hostile/ well wishing)	M.I. Immature, lonely, miserable, guilty
	F.2. Unconven- tional, de- manding	F.2. Secretive, passive, helpless	F.2. ? idealized F.3. Aggres- sive, very controlled	O.2. Persecut- ing, reject- ing, compas- sionless
	Superficial talk, sleep	passive renuncia- tion	Struggle to preserve principle	Hopeless, with- drawal/ punishing, rejection
	(12)	(11)	(3)	(7)
	M.I. Passive, dependent	M.I. Passive, persecuted, contemp- tuous	M.I. Dependent passive, very controlled	O.1. { Passive, hopeless, O.2. { violently angry
C.	F.2. Passive, idealized	M/F.2. Persecu- ting, rejecting	M.2. Passive, controlled	O.3. Persecut- ing, perverse
	F.3. Persecut- ing, threat- ening		F.3. Forbid- ding, morose, threaten- ing	
	Cosy depend- ence/male- volent threats	Passive complaint/ ruthless rejection	Morose contem- plation	Await attack/ perverse domination

For this purpose the stories in response to the "Group" pictures, A<sub>5</sub>, B<sub>5</sub>, C<sub>5</sub>, may be taken as two-person situations, for only in the case of the story for C<sub>5</sub> is there any attempt to differentiate the characters in the group and there the effort is only temporary. There are, then, twenty-nine characters in the stories. Of these:

Fourteen are threatened or persecuted in some way.

In eight instances this is clearly expressed;

A<sub>1</sub> (1), B<sub>3</sub> (2) (3), B<sub>5</sub> (1), C<sub>1</sub> (2) (3),

C<sub>2</sub> (1), C<sub>5</sub> (1) (2).

In six instances it is implied;

A<sub>1</sub> (1) (2), A<sub>2</sub> (1) (2), C<sub>3</sub> (1) (2).

Seven are persecuting, threatening figures;

A<sub>1</sub> (3), A<sub>5</sub> (2), B<sub>5</sub> (2), C<sub>1</sub> (3), C<sub>2</sub> (2),

C<sub>3</sub> (3), C<sub>5</sub> (3).

And concerning the remaining eight persons in the stories, A<sub>3</sub> (1) is excluded from a relationship by A<sub>3</sub> (2) and (3) who in some way forbid it. B<sub>3</sub> (1) shows hostile intent (denied), while there is an implied threat to the relationship described in respect of B<sub>1</sub> (1) (2), and B<sub>2</sub> (1) (2).

The social situations presented in the pictures for the most part are seen as predominantly threatening, forbidding situations. In nine out of the twelve stories one or more of the persons are threatened, dominated or more specifically persecuted by another person or persons in the situation described. In peopling his world, that is in his perception of social situations, the patient, therefore, shows a very marked tendency to see threatening, dominating, forbidding and persecuting people. This is a very strong expectancy, to use Brunner's term, which he brings to each social situation: his organism is "tuned" in this way. This expectancy is strong in respect of both men and women; it is particularly so in respect of older women and people in authority. Such women and people in authority are there all the time, in every social situation, a real or potential threat. In some situations, for example, in all the "group" situations and in C<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>2</sub>, this expectancy comes to the surface and is, as it were, acted out within the story. In other situations, as sampled in the test, the patient is able to avoid the sadistic persecutions which he anticipates by careful defensive efforts.



In all the twelve stories there is one person at least who is passive. In almost every case this passivity is clearly related to fear, helplessness and futility. In the "group" situations and in C<sub>2</sub> fear of a persecuting, retaliating authority dominates; in A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, A<sub>3</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>3</sub> this fear is present, but the main anxiety centres upon the loss of, or inability to make, a needed passive dependent relation with a woman because of the threat inherent in the social situation. This passive dependent relationship with a woman is clearly a part of the expectancy put upon the social situations in A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>. It is apparent also in A<sub>3</sub>, B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>3</sub> and C<sub>3</sub>, i.e. it operates in all the stories except C<sub>2</sub> and the "group" situations. These situations which appear to confirm the expectancy of persecution by authority figures, both men and women, arouse so much violent anger and persecutory anxiety, that the hope of a dependent satisfying relation must be given up.

Where the passive dependent relationship is most clearly shown, one of the persons in the situation is seen as an idealized woman, as in A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>, i.e. a person with whom it is possible to be at one, to have security and comfort without making demands upon her, and without experiencing the effects of frustration or restraint. It is a childlike phantasy relationship. The need is for a permanent relationship of this kind. It is only in response to picture C<sub>1</sub> (a particularly warm and secure stimulus) that hope of maintaining the relation is stronger than the fear that it will be destroyed. In the response to B<sub>1</sub>, a compromise is reached; the physical comforts of such a relationship are enjoyed in a detached sort of play act from which all depth of feeling is excluded and the temporary nature of the relationship is emphasized.

The patient peoples his world, then, very largely in terms of (a) forbidding, dominating, threatening, persecuting figures; (b) passive dependent and passive afraid, hopeless figures; (c) idealized figures who satisfy dependent needs, and make no demands in return. Except in these terms there is little individuality given to the people in the stories. There is no building up of any satisfying relationship which becomes, or could become, the basis of constructive activity. There is intense feeling, often violent feeling, in the stories, but the patient in telling them detaches himself from the situation. Feelings are rigidly controlled or denied. In



one instance only (CG) do they show in direct aggression, which is of brief duration, for the character relapses quickly into abject passivity. Otherwise there are only a few hints of underlying anger and contempt showing in the manifest content of the stories, e.g. in B1 and in C2.

This represents an unusual perception of social situations as judged against the evidence provided in the normative data, the psychologist's more extended experience with the test, and one's adult view of the world of people as it is in reality. Not only is the patient's perception of social situations unusual in terms of people's roles and relations one to another, but his perception of the actual content of the pictures, the human figures, the reality content and reality context, is in many ways unusual. Such unusual features of his mode of perception have been examined in the sequence analysis of the stories, and an attempt has been made to show how they are part and parcel of the dynamic process which determines the patient's social perception of the various stimuli presented in the pictures.

In these social situations presented in the pictures there is nothing which in itself might make the people good or bad, helpful or forbidding. How then may the patient's own individual perception of his world of people be explained? The way he sees his world will determine how he behaves within it. The explanation of why he sees the world in this way will provide the reasons for his behaviour, and it will also provide information which will be of value in considering psychotherapeutic action.

## 2. *Why does he perceive social situations in the way he does?*

In the theoretical statement which precedes the description of this projective technique it is postulated that the dominant "expectancy" in the "private world" which an individual brings to each stimulus situation can be described in terms of a dynamic process in which relief of tension is sought in respect of an unconscious dynamic system, as a prerequisite to coming to terms with the external situation. This unconscious tension system contains three interrelated processes all of which may be described in terms of phantasied or more conscious relations with people or "objects". The extent to which an individual's perception of the



world is dominated by unconscious phantasied relationships is a measure of the strength of the tension in the unconscious dynamic system. It is also a measure of the individual's conscious ego experience of people, i.e. experience that has been consciously tested out and modified in his relations with people throughout his life, in so far as this experience may be used in the particular situation in question.

The extent to which the individual can people his world with persons who have both good and bad aspects in their personality, who are at times helpful and at others frustrating, but with whom it is still possible to have some measure of constructive and satisfying relationship, will be a measure of this latter body of experience. For this represents a view of people in more adult, mature terms. On the other hand the absence of such characterization, together with its possibility of constructive relationships, may be taken as indicating that the individual's view of the world is dominated by childlike fantasy perceptions of people, a mode of perception which is more in terms of "wholly good" or "wholly bad".

Such is the perception of people shown by the patient in response to the twelve pictures so far considered.<sup>1</sup> How may this be explained? The particular way in which the figures are perceived is clearly a dynamic process deriving its characterization from the inner needs of the patient—needs which lead to selection within and interpretation of the stimulus field in such a way that they find what they need.

In Table 2 are summarized the main processes in respect of each of the social situations presented in the three series of pictures. The classification used under each story is the same as that used in the schematic analysis; (a), (b), (c) refer to the three phases of the dynamic process contained in the tension system, namely, unconscious wished-for relationship, feared consequences, and defensive efforts to avoid these consequences. The result of this dynamic process in terms of the amount of freedom left to make satisfying,

<sup>1</sup> In the Theoretical Statement it was argued that certain conditions relating to personality dynamics, and their match with situational variables, determine how clearly unconscious dynamics are revealed in an interaction situation. The stories given by this particular patient were selected to illustrate as strikingly as possible the main theoretical viewpoint.



reality-based relations with people is evaluated and rated as follows:

- (o): equilibrium maintained, i.e. defence is efficient to the extent of dealing with the anxiety relating to the threatened consequence, but no freedom for positive relations.
- (-): equilibrium not maintained, feared consequences dominate the relationships.
- (+): equilibrium maintained and freedom achieved for a measure of positive relations.
- (- -) and (+ +) may be used for further discrimination, and o-, o+ may be used to indicate a tendency towards negative or positive outcome in this respect.

The outcomes of the dynamic processes described in Table II in terms of freedom to make positive and satisfying relations with people, are largely negative.

In four instances, A<sub>2</sub>, A<sub>3</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>, the rating given is o, in two instances, A<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>1</sub>, it is o with a tendency to -, in three cases, A<sub>0</sub>, B<sub>0</sub>, C<sub>0</sub>, it is - -, in one case, C<sub>2</sub>, it is - ,

while only in B<sub>1</sub> and C<sub>1</sub> is a + rating given. In the former instance the measure of positive relations with a woman brings little in the way of satisfaction or permanence, and the underlying fear of deep involvement and the contempt of women is clearly shown. In the latter case the hope of a positive relation with women is just maintained against the phantasied threats of a third person: the kind of relation sought is childlike and dependent.

The absence of capacity and freedom to make more satisfying relations suggests that the tension in the dynamic system is unusually strong and that a very large part of the personality resources are taken up with defensive effort.

Examination of the main defences used supports this hypothesis. Particularly strong are repressive defences, denial of unconscious wishes and of aggression, denial of involvement and of responsibility, extreme detachment and inhibition of feeling, masochistic passivity and withdrawal. Mechanisms of splitting and paranoid projection are marked in A<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>1</sub> and in the group



## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF STORIES

TABLE II

*The Main Dynamics of the Tension System*  
Social Situation Presented

1 Person	2 Person
(1)	(2)
(a) Infantile demanding? „ sexual aggressive?	(a) Infantile demanding? „ sexual aggressive?
(b) Loss of object, attack.	(b) Destruction or loss of object, attack.
(c) Splitting, denial: idealize paranoid projection, passi- vity, intellectualize.	(c) Denial of aggression, ideal- ize—passivity, passive fear, hypervigilance, intellectual effort.
(o -)	(o +)
(6)	(9)
(a) Infantile dependent, „ sexual aggressive.	(a) Infantile dependent, „ sex rivalry.
(b) Destruction or loss of object, domination or persecution.	(b) Destruction or loss of object? attack.
(c) Denial of aggression, hyper- vigilance, avoid involvement.	(c) Deny reality and aggression, passivity, renunciation.
(+ o)	(o)
(12)	(11)
(a) Infantile dependent, „ aggressive.	(a) Aggressive domination.
(b) Loss of object, attack by object and rival.	(b) Destruction of object? rejection, attack, persecution.
(c) Denial of aggression, passive idealize, passive fear, intel- lectualize.	(c) Denial of aggression, passi- vity, paranoid projection, avoid involvement.
(o +)	(-)

A.

B.

C.

# A CASE STUDY IN DETAIL

TABLE II (cont.)

## *The Main Dynamics of the Tension System* Social Situation Presented

	3 Person	Group
	(8)	(5)
	(a) Separate object and rival.	(a) Sadistic destructive, „ sexual
	(b) Rejection? attack by object and rival?	(b) Annihilation, castration
A.	(c) Deny reality, deny aggressive rivalry, passivity, impotence.	(c) Splitting, paranoid projection, denial of aggression, masochism, passivity, deny reality.
	(o)	(- -)
	(4)	(1)
	(a) Infantile demanding? „ sexual aggressive, rivalry.	(a) Aggressive domination, „ rivalry, sexual aggressive.
	(b) Destruction or loss of object, attack, destruction of self.	(b) Rejection, attack, ? castration.
B.	(c) Denial of aggression, idealize, paranoid projection, passivity-masochism, omnipotence, intellectualize.	(c) Deny aggression, paranoid projection, passive-masochism, castration? isolation.
	(o-)	(- -)
	(3)	(7)
	(a) Infantile demanding? „ sexual aggressive, rivalry.	(a) Sadistic domination „ sexual aggressive.
	(b) Loss of object, attack, castration?	(b) Annihilation, perverse sexual attack.
C.	(c) Denial, passive dependence, passive fear, intellectualize.	(c) Denial of aggression, paranoid projection, passive-masochism, deny reality.
	(o)	(- -)



## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF STORIES

situations. Extreme vigilance and intellectualization are seen in almost every story.

In spite of the severity of the repressive defences and the wide range of them employed, there is little freedom achieved for creative activity. For this reason, as well as from the internal evidence of the stories, it is clear that the unconscious dynamics which are being dealt with by these defences are unusually powerful.

Examination of Table II shows that in all the stories there is evidence of intense fear and anxiety. This anxiety concerns the loss or destruction of a needed object. In all, except C<sub>2</sub> and the group situations, there is evidence also of fear of attack and persecution by authority figures, men and older women. In the responses to the one-person, two-person and three-person situations these figures threaten the secure dependent relationship the patient wishes to achieve. The threat is particularly strong in those responses which are made into three-person situations, and it is felt in terms of retaliation and persecution for his sexual aggressive wishes in relation to women. It is in such rivalry situations that the tension becomes unusually strong and that the fears are expressed most directly. It must be, therefore, that in such three-person situations the frustration experienced is greater and the unconscious aggressive wishes are stronger and more violent.

In the responses to the group situations threats are so overwhelming that self-preservation becomes the main issue. This can only be achieved by abject passivity, by denial of the reality of the situations and by falling back upon an early phantasy of omnipotence. In C<sub>2</sub> persecution and rejection by an older dominating woman is accepted equally passively.

What is the nature of the unconscious aggressive wishes which he experiences in relation to objects that, in part of himself, he must needs preserve? In eight of the stories, that is, excluding those given in response to the group situations and C<sub>2</sub>, there is evidence of the need for a dependent childlike relationship, a phantasy relationship in which satisfaction of primitive needs is given without the possibility of frustration. But in reality this needed relationship can never be maintained because any frustration



results<sup>o</sup> in violent aggressive phantasies in which the woman is dominated and primitive oral and sexual gratifications are, as it were, forced from her. Hence the fear of destroying the needed object, of rejection, or of punishment, including castration by her, as the inevitable consequence of this violent response to frustration. The wholly good, satisfying woman turns into a wholly bad, forbidding, persecuting, dominating woman. Built into the fabric of this early unconscious phantasy system are other phantasies which result from an additional frustration in the form of a rival or rivals. Because of these additional reinforcing phantasies in three-person situations, and possibly also in the group situations, the tension is increased. To have sexual wishes in relation to a woman brings the fear of additional and even more violent retribution, both from the woman who forbids such gratifications and from the rival.

• Not only is there this fear, which is particularly marked in the form of castration anxiety, but the anxiety about losing the dependent relationship with the woman is also increased. Furthermore not only is there concern in this phantasy about destroying the needed object, but also anxiety about destroying the rival, for destruction of the rival might in turn result in both retaliation from the woman and loss of her attention. The intensity of the feelings and the potential breakdown of defences in the group situations in the pictures suggests that in the social situations they represent, frustration of both dependent and early sexual needs were particularly strong. In such situations there is greater rivalry for attention; indeed there is little hope of making an exclusive relationship, which represents the patient's basic need. The violence of the destructive wishes which result from this frustration is matched by the phantasied persecutions of a dominating and frustrating authority. Phantasies of frustration and of physical destruction come to the surface in crude form, and the indications are that these phantasies are concerned with sexual attack.

It would seem that the evidence points to violent demanding and destructive unconscious wishes as a response to frustration of both primitive dependent needs and early sexual expression. This is epitomized in response to the Blank card, where, on the one hand, there is a crude expression of violent animal-like feelings



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by the side of urgent efforts to deny their reality and to plead for compassion and attention.

If these are the main dynamics which determine the patient's perception of social situations, how will he behave in real life?

### 3. *What kind of behaviour in various social situations will result from the way he sees them?*

On the surface he will show as a gentle, passive, intensely earnest person. He will seek to discuss things intellectually and to introduce his own ideas about society and human progress, giving the impression that he is an idealist full of scrupulously good intentions, who has a hatred of injustice and aggression in any form. There will be a note of cynicism and complaint against the world as it is, in particular that other people do not view life sufficiently seriously, and that they concern themselves only with superficial matters. He will create the impression that he feels that all the world is wrong in some way, in that it does not match up to the ideals he holds. He will strive to show that he experiences deep concern and deep feelings, and he will complain that others cannot share his interests in the things that really matter. His contact and conversation will be kept carefully on a detached and intellectual level.

His need for a dependent relationship with women will show through in his helplessness, his sadness and his pleading manner, but because he is afraid to become dependent, lest he should be rejected or dominated by the woman, he will attempt to give the impression of being self-sufficient. Because, in part of himself, his demands on people are so great that he fears he might destroy by taking, or be punished for being greedy, he will be content with little. He will accept a low level of satisfaction in terms of material things. A part of him would like to be powerful and able to dominate others, but because he fears what he would do were he in that position, and because he also fears to rival, he will not be able to achieve success in work or in social life. He will not be able to use his intellectual abilities effectively. He will also show physical timidity. Because he fears he might lose control of his feelings, at depth in terms of destroying one he most wishes to preserve, or attacking one he most fears, and nearer the surface in



terms of revealing himself as a helpless, childlike, dependent person, he will keep himself from expressing strong feeling and put great emphasis on self-control. In talking or in writing he will select his words precisely to avoid any direct expression of anger or of thoughts which might be unrefined or offending. He will tend to avoid reference to bodily needs, in particular sexual needs. He will strongly emphasize the spiritual aspects of sexual relations in order to preserve his illusion of a possible ideal relation with a woman, and in order to avoid phantasied punishments for his unconscious wishes. Sexual interests and sexual needs can only be satisfied secretly and alone, or with someone with whom there is no likelihood of emotional involvement.

The patient will be extremely sensitive to the behaviour of others: he will tend to see others as ideal people or as potentially threatening or persecuting people: i.e. wholly good or wholly bad. Because he views external reality so much in terms of his own inner world he will be constantly on the look-out for possible rejection, belittlement or physical attack. He will constantly find threats in the external world which the reality of the situation does not warrant.

Rarely will he show any direct expression of aggression to other people. His underlying unconscious anger and resentment will show in occasional biting humour and cynicism, or in an implied contempt of people he cannot idealize. Because his repressive defences are so well woven, where his unconscious aggression does break through it is likely to be violent and uncontrolled. A manic pleasure in destruction which is, of course, consciously denied is suggested by his use of the word "joy" in AG. In a group situation or in face of authority figures any angry feelings are quickly controlled (CG) and he sees himself as the passive, and in a sense the willing victim of a remorseless persecution. It is likely that he will avoid becoming a member of a social group, or indeed of a family: three-person and group situations as revealed in his stories permit no freedom for satisfying his needs, or indeed any hope of doing so. In such situations he must be passive, uncomplaining and extremely detached. Only in a two-person situation, where there is the possibility of making an ideal relation with a woman, is there any freedom for activity on his part, or



indeed any hope for his future (A<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>). Because he is so dependent and because he needs continually the assurance that he can love without harming, and be loved without being rejected, he can never be alone. (Any opportunity of describing his activities or feelings when alone is neglected by him in responses to the pictures (B<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>1</sub>).)

The whole pattern of his life will be dominated by attempts to make an exclusive dependent relation with a woman. He will seek to make an ideal asexual relation with a younger woman (A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>) for he fears that any sexual relation would be harmful or destructive and would result in inevitable rejection by her. Older women, though they give promise of satisfying his dependent needs, are seen as potential persecutors and may not be trusted (A<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>).

Superficially his behaviour will be gentle, passive and undemanding in his efforts to keep up an ideal relationship. He will feel constantly in doubt as to his ability to maintain it, fearing rejection by the woman or interference from outside. In reality he will make great demands upon women to serve his dependent needs. He will tend to be blindly self-centred, seeking attention and service from women. He will require to be the one in control, yet he will not be able to take or share responsibility. He will expect the woman to fit in with his needs first and foremost, and will show no regard for her convenience or her real feelings. He will give little in return.

He will avoid sexual relations with women except under very special conditions. Where the woman is particularly passive, and where there is no possible challenge from a third party, some form of sexual relation might be possible, but a marked degree of sexual inhibition, e.g. in premature emission or partial impotence may be manifest. Where any permanent emotional tie is likely to develop or where the woman is involved with a third person who is a possible rival he will most likely be completely impotent. The only possible kind of relation with a woman he can maintain will be one which is "all domestic—no passion—doesn't make any demands on either of them" (B<sub>1</sub>). As an alternative he may seek temporary, secret gratification (B<sub>2</sub>) or relations with a prostitute (end of B<sub>1</sub>).

He will be in constant doubts as to whether he can maintain a



relationship with a woman. He will try desperately to keep separate his ideal of a good woman who will gratify his dependent needs without making demands upon him, and a bad, dominating woman who will punish or reject him for any demands he might make. He will always find it difficult to keep separate these two aspects of women as he sees them.

In the stories where an older, threatening woman is introduced she is described as a masculine type of woman (e.g. C<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>). This woman is very much like the persecuting authorities in AG and those implied in BG and CG. It is often unclear whether the phantasied persecutor is man or woman (A<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, BG, CG). Men in authority are, therefore, responded to very much like women in such a position. To rival with a man for the possession of the woman is a situation he cannot contemplate in reality, for man, like the woman in authority, threatens him with dire consequences for any sexual feelings. Men and women in authority are threatening persecuting figures from whom one can expect no compassion, and against whom one may not express resistance or anger. With men in authority therefore he will be passive, placating and pleading. He will avoid any situation in which he is likely to feel tied to an authority or likely to become under his control. Relations with men are probably restricted to a rather detached intellectual exchange.

### *Implications for therapy*

How will this patient respond to psychotherapy? Before embarking on any form of psychotherapy it is important for the psychiatrist to have some precise estimate of the therapeutic prospects. A knowledge of the patient's capacity for change in the dynamic structure of his inner world, and of the possible repercussions of facing him with his unconscious conflicts, will enable judgements to be made as to the most suitable form of psychotherapy to be attempted. At the present time, judgements concerning the possible outcome of psychotherapy are based on estimates of the patient's ego strength and its capacity to assimilate and change powerful unconscious forces. Do the results obtained in the present investigation provide any clear indications in these terms?



Reference to Table I shows that by far the larger number of the figures with whom the patient's ego is identified are feeble and passive, while from Table II it has been shown that he has very little capacity for making any positive and satisfying relations with people. Within him there are not enough "expectancies" of goodness in people for him to be able to test out in psychotherapy his phantasies of badness and persecution. The degree of tension and the violent destructive impulses which are just kept in check by extreme vigilance and closely woven repressive defences, and the precarious separation of his inner world from external reality, make it unlikely that he will be capable of resolving these unconscious conflicts. In his transference relationship with the therapist he will quickly reach the situation revealed in the response to the Blank card, which in one respect represents a life and death struggle in which the issue is unlimited sadistic gratification of primitive needs. He has too little real contact with external reality, too little belief in his own capacity to love and be loved, for him to face and test out in the transference relationship these phantasied threats which he fears as a result of his unconscious aggression, without grave disturbance and possibly psychotic breakdown.

Equally in a less intensive psychotherapy he will co-operate only to the extent that he can remain detached and in control, for as soon as any deeper relationship is formed the likelihood of strong ties will arouse violent aggressive wishes and consequent persecutory phantasies from which he must needs escape. A supportive counselling form of therapy is more likely to be of help.

*Résumé of information about the patient from independent clinical interviews*

- (a) From psychiatric interview which preceded the giving of the Object Relations Test.
- (b) From records of therapeutic interviews with his wife over sixty sessions.
- (c) From records of therapeutic discussions with the patient over thirty-two sessions.

(a) *Psychiatric interview*

Strange staccato speech. Pointed beard, slightly ginger, tense,

## A CASE STUDY IN DETAIL

tight-lipped, but with a gleam of humour. Informal but tidy clothes. Very precise. Strongly introverted and seems to have a strong need to be loved. Shy and self-depreciatory.

In discussing his problem he shows strong rational control, with only a hint here and there of "smouldering fire". He is a mild intellectual man with artistic tastes and a sense of duty: cold and potentially cruel. An introverted, schizoid individual, but within normal limits at interview.

Although he was never profoundly involved in his present marriage it jogged along until his present attachment to a younger woman. Friendly terms are all he requires in his marriage but his wife looks for more.

He had been married previously to a girl much younger than himself, but she had gone to another man and had obtained a divorce. At the time he had felt very broken and very jealous, feelings he hadn't believed himself capable of before. When his present wife came along he had sunk into depression, didn't know what to do with the rest of his life and didn't care what he did, even if he made an unsuitable marriage.

There has been no sexual intercourse with his wife for more than eighteen months. Patient says his wife has never attracted him. They are friendly but his wife feels it more than he does. His wife would like to resume an ideal relation; short of that she is prepared to compromise and live as they do at present. He says he has no hatred of his wife, but she is very jealous and fears being left. Seeks help for his wife so that she may be able to face his leaving her and being left on her own.

He feels the younger woman he has now found represents goodness for him, something to protect. Feels she has depth of feeling and awakens his imagination in a way his wife has not been able to do.

### (b) *Interviews with patient's wife*

She describes him as unpractical, having no concern for material things, e.g. clothes, money, belongings. He is very diffident, hates to go out and doesn't make friends, and he is very unpunctual. She says he has ideas of doing great things but never



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gets anything done, e.g. he wants to write a book but cannot concentrate on his work at it. The worst trouble began after the baby was born. There has been no sexual intercourse since then. He had told her that there had been no satisfactory sexual relation with his first wife. He says that sex is a spiritual thing but he collects and hides pornographic literature. They still share a bed; he can never make up his mind to leave her.

On occasion he has made sexual advances when asleep—perhaps when dreaming—if she responds he becomes wildly furious. When she had interfered with his relations with the younger woman he was now attached to he had become extremely violent, and had attacked her, and neighbours had given her protection. These incidents were in sharp contrast to his usual behaviour which is most gentle.

He is very dependent and quite unreliable; he cannot make any decisions concerning his relations with his wife and child. He always keeps his wife waiting for any dates, e.g. he was an hour late in meeting her to go to the cinema. He seems to be unable to feel responsibility: he needs to be accepted but will not allow himself to be accepted. He demands comforting and mothering. He is afraid of losing his job. He seems to feel despised and rejected. He has told his wife that she paralyses all effort in him so that he cannot work. She feels he paralyses her too. She cannot get on with the housework when he is about. In order to get on with his work he maintains a room in another house, even though they cannot afford it, but he hardly ever uses it.

### (c) *Interviews with patient*

A small, quiet, self-effacing man, with occasional glints of anger and amusement, all emotion carefully held in check. He tries to keep the therapist interested and amused, but does not do this by telling his story. He talks in a gentle way, and chooses his words carefully. He seldom speaks spontaneously, tries to feel what he says before he says it.

Contact was difficult to maintain. He often came late and sometimes did not come at all, but expected the therapist to be waiting the full hour for him. If the therapist did not understand there was a greater withdrawal. Contact was on an intellectual level as a



kind of test out. In the first interview he really made no contact at all, he tried to keep the interview extremely academic. He has a very good intellectual cover.

He feels himself to be rather unreal, not like other people, both more and less intelligent and capable. Sees himself in opposites; much more matter of fact and capable, much more stupid, etc. His wife is seen as a dependent woman and therefore dangerous because demanding. Other women are phantasied as not being dependent and with them he will not get dependent, as they will provide a satisfactory environment for him.

He realizes he is frightened of being out of touch with reality: does not know anything about his rage in relation to other people, knows about his fear of loneliness, but not why he has to keep himself away. He defends himself against hurting and being hurt by withdrawing. His object relations seem to be either phantasied and good, or real and dangerous because dependent and depending. He probably has never yet made a relationship in which phantasy and reality meet.

He has got used to living at a low level of satisfaction. He said that he felt he was a split person; there was a part of him which was against the creative part and kept it from doing anything. He felt his wife was in alliance with the thing which went against the creative effort; she stopped him being able to do anything.

Referring to the incident when he had attacked his wife, he denied any intention of hurting her, adding that the pleasure of doing so would have been outbalanced by the almost certain punishment which would follow. He strongly denied having used the word "pleasure".

He said that he could only get near to women who were helpless and needed him on a practical level, but were no inspiration to him and would not reject him, or if they did, it would not matter.

His first wife had said he was not warm enough for her.

He is afraid to force the young girl friend to go further with him because he is frightened of being rebuffed by her altogether; he finally broke with this idealized woman when he felt more was required of him than a platonic relation.

He always felt his foster mother had been on the look-out for



any sexual manifestations on his part. His recollection was that he had quarrelled with his real mother, he had been beastly to her, just before he had gone out on the day she was killed in a road accident.

He said that he would find it difficult to give up his wife's bed and her presence, for it gave him warmth and comfort. Yet he was always glad to get away, and his sexual feelings were never directed to her.

After thirty odd interviews which were spread over fifteen months owing to holiday breaks and his non-attendance, he broke off the treatment. He has reported two other short periods of treatment which he terminated after three or four interviews. The treatment in these instances was given by men. The interviews from which the above résumé is taken were given by a woman.

\* \* \*

The study of a single case, however detailed, cannot establish any general laws. Such a study has been reported here to show the possible lines on which the psychologist can explore the inner world of the individual subject, including those forces that give symbolic private meanings to his external world and so influence his behaviour in a very basic way.

The attempt has been made to isolate the main variables which are to be considered in such explorations of personality. A clearer understanding of the nature of these variables and their inter-relations is an essential step in the direction of more quantified studies in personality dynamics. It is in these terms also that the problems concerning the validation of projective techniques may be formulated.

The above detailed study of the behaviour samples provided by the Object Relations Test is presented also as an attempt to communicate a technique. Since the material lends itself to analysis in a variety of ways, depending on the individual preferences of the psychologist, the purpose of the investigation, and in many cases on the individual way in which the particular subject reveals himself, shorter and alternative ways of treating the material are illustrated in six examples given in the following pages.

## SHORTER CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF USE OF TECHNIQUE

### B. SHORTER CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE USE OF THE TECHNIQUE

#### I

*Male—age twenty-nine*

*Married: Graduate Chemist*

*Second child in a family of four, with two older step-brothers*

Complains of continuous anxiety about his responsibilities, especially new ones. He reacts quickly and badly to any frustration. He is not able to relax, always finding some new task, trivial or otherwise, which he must deal with. Shows a physical reaction in the form of headaches, stomach pains, occasional nausea and feelings of heaviness in his limbs. Present situation: he is facing new responsibilities in his work.

#### *Behaviour during the interview*

Makes a very good show of control throughout the test. Adopts an attitude of exaggerated ease, sitting in an unconventional way in the chair. At times he smiles in a way which appears to be cynical and is out of keeping with the situation. Speaks in a soft rather weak voice, and often tells the stories in a rather lifeless and detached manner which contrasts with the air of ease and confidence he tries to maintain. In the response to the first picture there is a demand for help and a thinly disguised complaint that it is not given. Stories to A2, A3 and BG are given with a marked pressure of speech.

Underlying feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy, and aggressive feelings towards authorities are apparent in his surface behaviour but his intellectual defences and compensatory efforts disguise these feelings very effectively. The sharp contrasts in his surface behaviour are to be noted.

#### *O. R. Test Protocol*

A1

A man walking through a fog—looks like a man. It doesn't convey anything more: doesn't give a lead as to where he is going or where he has been. Fog suggests probably that he is in a sort



of depressed condition. Am I to force myself to imagine things? Perhaps he's walking about because of the sort of problem—thinking it was—perhaps a difficulty or a dispute with somebody (50" pause). (Soft, rather weak voice and expression.)

Doesn't suggest anything more than that; I could go on spinning a yarn. (*What sort of person is he?*) Picture doesn't convey any hint as to character—you want me to concentrate on what the picture conveys, don't you? (120" pause). Can we go on to something else? (*Can you say how it turns out?*) I was brought up on stories and films so I'd say it turns out happily.

A<sub>2</sub>

It suggests, I think, a man and woman, perhaps husband and wife, perhaps sitting in front of a fire—discussing a family problem—children—school—how they are progressing there, perhaps. Just a conventional domestic scene. Perhaps the same situation as I might be in, discussing whether the youngsters should go to nursery school or mother stay at home. Father—that's me—thinks mother should stay at home and children not be farmed out on someone else. They decide to give it a trial and see what happens, and in the light of the reactions of the child decide whether the mother should go out or stay at home.

In my own case I know what would happen; if the fact of the child going to nursery school was detrimental to his welfare, his or her mother would co-operate. (Smiles all the time he tells the ending to this story.)

C<sub>3</sub>

This again suggests an ordinary family—it looks as though Father is sitting in the best armchair, Mother by the table. They have just finished a meal. I imagine it is their son by the mantelpiece—just come in from work perhaps. Father might perhaps be retired. Perhaps he's had some sort of disagreement with his parents—his back is turned towards them. Looks as if they're discussing his future, whether he will continue in his present job or in something else. Perhaps the parents are bringing pressure to bear on him. Perhaps he's been asked to follow in father's footsteps in a job which is uncongenial to him. (Lifeless, quiet

SHORTER CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF USE OF TECHNIQUE  
ruminating voice.) Ending of the story—he feels he has a job that he wants to do and is determined to go through with it. (Gives picture back saying “thank you”. He sits head in hand—off-hand but quiet attitude.)

B<sub>3</sub>

I think it's a boy and girl, perhaps sweethearts, saying “good night” after a pleasant evening. For some reason somebody is watching them saying good night. Probably nosey landlady or parent—perhaps the girl has come home later than parents approve of. After they have said good night the mother perhaps reprimands the girl for having stayed out later than she should have done. Girl probably says she's sorry she caused anxiety and won't do it again. (Gives picture back asking “All right?” with a smile that suggests that this ending to the story doesn't represent his real feelings but that I—as psychologist, as man—will understand).

AG

A number of people attending a sort of meeting or watching for something to happen. Perhaps it's a sort of accident—perhaps an explosion in a coal mine. Friends and relatives waiting for news. The situation is very trying, causing a great deal of anxiety. Rescue work is going on but as yet there is no definite information. They receive news that progress has been made in the rescue work and some people have been brought up, but it appears that for a certain number the chances are somewhat remote.

B<sub>1</sub>

(Laughs.) This suggests my room, perhaps at University—a towel on the bed and the room is somewhat sparsely furnished. I have been out to the theatre or a meeting or with friends—am coming back, climbing a long flight of stairs to the top of the house. Perhaps I've attended a cinema show—a Continental film at a cosmopolitan theatre nearby with one of my friends. I'm somewhat glad to be back; make myself cocoa, bit of cheese, etc., and go to bed; glad of relaxation which the show and company has afforded me.

(“How do you cope with people who can't do anything?”)



C<sub>6</sub>

Some steps, a shadow on the steps—crowd below—perhaps addressing them; perhaps an idealist with a message for the people. Denouncing the government for its incompetence. Telling crowd that the government is not carrying out its election promises and that it is neglecting to give all the help it can. They are unfortunate and through no fault of their own have suffered. He is sceptical of politicians and telling the audience they should be more alert when they listen to political speakers. He finds the audience in part sympathetic—some barrack him and accuse him of being an anarchist. The block-headed ones who always vote as father did denounce him without any reason. He continues to put his views by fact and argument and persuades a number of the audience to support his point of view.

A<sub>3</sub>

Here is a headmaster and a member of his staff discussing a boy who is standing in a corner and has been brought before the Head for a misdemeanour—perhaps stealing. Head is rather domineering and says, "Punish him right away". The form master says, "No, we must investigate—find out why—what are the circumstances at home; e.g. are there domestic difficulties—is he seeking recognition through this? etc." Headmaster is sympathetic; they examine the boy—talk it over and find it is not that by nature he is inclined to theft—he has done it really because his parents haven't given him the right care and attention they should have done. Headmaster decides not to expel the boy but to make the punishment as light as possible. (Pressure of speech in telling this story.)

B<sub>2</sub>

A house, trees, bushes—a boy and a girl—perhaps they've decided to get married; they are engaged anyway. He has proposed and she's accepted. He is bringing her home and is not sure if her parents will agree—they are quite young. They realize they are fond of each other but think they are too young to commit each other. They are discussing this under a tree before going in and telling father and mother and asking their blessing. Eventually they go in and break the news. The parents are a little taken aback,

but the boy proves to their satisfaction that he is sincere and will always care for the girl and that they will be happier if her parents will approve. The parents see reason and give their approval.

BG

(Sighs.) A group of boys—youths perhaps fourteen to fifteen years of age. They are near a sort of ruined building, perhaps a church. They have a game they are playing there. One of the boys has broken a code of the gang and given away a secret sign of the gang. They are discussing whether he shall be expelled. It is a very privileged position to be in. They discuss this boy (pressure of speech) and consider the fact that without good reason he gave away their code. He had accepted it at the outset and had taken an oath that he would observe all their rules. They have no alternative but to expel him, which they do.

C2

A bedroom. Rather a bulky person—perhaps it's an old lady—her quarters are somewhat dingy—the bed suggests it is an old-fashioned bed—there is a picture of her late husband on the wall. The dressing table in the corner is rather dilapidated—had it so long and she's living now on a somewhat inadequate pension. She is considering as she goes up to her bed if she can manage with her allowance and if her sons will help in any way. She knows that two of them at any rate will not leave her in a condition of poverty, but she is not sure of the other boy. She realizes that in the case of the third son, his own home circumstances are against his being able to help her—his wife is extravagant. Her son would wish to help her but through family responsibilities he is not able to do so. She feels confident, however, that she will get help from a part at least of her family.

Cr

This is rather Bohemian; it is probably the quarters of an artist. A towel is carelessly flung over the back of a wash basin and sink all in one. It is probably at the top of an old house. He has just had a hurried meal before going out sketching and left the place in a somewhat untidy condition. (Voice soft, weak, often almost



fades.) There is someone outside the window—probably a friend of his. Perhaps they are going out together—going to sketch buildings in the locality. It is a fine day. They chat amiably about a party the night before. They take easels, chalks and crayons and go off happily to this site—discussing art in general and putting their knowledge into practice.

Blank

Well, I'll draw you a domestic scene. A living room of a house, a modern house, very well designed and executed. It is in a pleasant suburban district. It has a broad expanse of window through which the sunshine pours in. It has a pleasant garden beyond. There are the father and mother. The father is on holiday and is doing odd jobs about the house—repairing a fault in the radio. Mother is busy preparing a delicacy, a pleasant treat. The children are in the garden, the boy is a little older than his sister, and they are having a grand time running around in sun suits, playing ball, throwing it to one another and laughing. Father and Mother are looking on with pride and enjoyment at the happiness of their children.

### *Comment on the Performance*

#### *Responses to one-person situations (stories A<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>)*

In response to the unstructured picture in A<sub>1</sub> he shows concern about lack of support in the stimulus situation. He is dependent upon such cues to help him deal with anxiety and possibly depressive feelings (fog reference) relating to aggressive fantasies which are just touched on in the story. He is blocked, restless in activity and has no freedom to let his imagination play in the situation. Emotional tone is flat. In transference the psychologist becomes the object of the aggression for not providing help and support. The outcome is a flight to another situation and a cynical denial of unhappy feelings.

In a more structured but unsupporting situation (B<sub>1</sub>) he seeks to escape from his own loneliness and feelings of deprivation by turning to intellectual outlets shared with other men. This

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solution is unsatisfactory and he must needs accept a low level of physical gratification (food) in drab surroundings alone.

In a more structured and more supporting situation (C<sub>1</sub>) he gains some freedom from his self-imposed control and obsessional activities, and successfully shares an artistic outlet with another man.

Relations with women are not touched on in this series of stories.

*Responses to two-person situations (stories A<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>)*

In response to A<sub>2</sub> he uses conventional attitudes and an effective intellectual approach to cover underlying angry feelings (expressed on behalf of the child he introduced into the story) that the woman will follow her own interests and neglect him. This is what he expects of women. His comment at the end shows his deep anger and contempt for women; in another aspect his need to assert his masculinity and his ability to control women. To do good to this child and protect him from harm depends on his ability to control the woman, and on her giving exclusive attention to the child. These underlying motivations are very well covered, but there is marked pressure of speech in telling the story.

In the second story in this series he is expressing a need for a heterosexual relationship and for independence, by the side of an expectancy that parents will not give their approval. His feelings of immaturity, inadequacy, and unworthiness are expressed. He must demonstrate his sincerity and his loyalty to the woman before he can expect permission to have her as a heterosexual partner. In this story this partner is given no individuality of her own.

A strong reparative need shows in response to C<sub>2</sub>, where his main concern is with the widowed woman inadequately provided for (his father died when the patient was seven). On the one hand there is anxiety about his ability to take the father's place and be the provider, for such a role is in conflict with the wish to satisfy his own needs. He seems to blame others for his difficulties and to rely on others to fulfil his obligations. Deeper down, the expectancy he puts on this stimulus situation is in terms of the woman whom he wishes to help and preserve (the widow) and the woman who makes demands upon him so that he cannot do



good. At bottom these aspects of women derive from conflict over his own demandingness and greed by the side of his wish to preserve and do good.

In his stories to all the three pictures showing a two-person situation, a three-person problem is dealt with which suggests that this represents one of the origins of his emotional conflicts. The woman is the most important person to come to terms with in these situations, the man is present but given no separate role.

*Responses to three-person situations (stories A<sub>3</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>)*

The response to A<sub>3</sub>, like A<sub>2</sub>, is given with marked pressure of speech. In both stories the concern is with parent figures who do or do not understand the child, who may cause the child distress or punish it, or on the other hand be helpful and tolerant. The authority figures in A<sub>3</sub> are split in this manner. As a way of dealing with these internal objects, perhaps to keep the good and bad aspects separate, always to preserve the assurance that there is a good aspect, he takes away the responsibility from the childlike bit of himself (the child who steals in the story) putting all the blame on the bad parents. It was their fault; in phantasy they gave too little love, so he had to steal it. These are the expectancies in terms of unconscious object relations which determine his perception of this social situation.

In response to B<sub>3</sub>, he puts on to the parent figures, the woman in particular, the expectancy that they will forbid or disapprove his heterosexual wishes. On the surface he passively accepts their control and censure. His ego identification is with the woman. Near the surface, as shown in his manner of ending the story, there is a passive resentment in the agreement on his part.

In the story for the coloured picture representing a three-person situation parent figures are again portrayed as restrictive, controlling and interfering authorities. They are not differentiated except that the father sits in the best chair (? where he would like to sit). There is no working out of the problem, no interaction between the three, although the resolution is towards independence. The story is given in an offhand manner and in a rather lifeless tone. It is no positive achievement though the offhand façade suggests indifference.

## SHORTER CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF USE OF TECHNIQUE

In the three-person situations, parent figures are not differentiated. They are, as it were, joint authorities; they could be both women or, as they are in A<sub>3</sub>, both men. Heterosexual rivalry in the three-person situation is avoided. Are fantasies about such rivalry too dangerous to be put out on to the situations? It is only in the passive role, ego identified with the girl, in B<sub>3</sub> that a move towards defiance of authority's disapproval of his heterosexual wishes is attempted.

### *Responses to the group situation (stories AG, BG, CG)*

The story given in response to AG shows his aggressive fantasies nearer the surface and his apprehension about the consequences of them. Reparative efforts are only partly successful. The outcome is depressive.

In the BG story again aggressive action, disloyalty to the group, brings inevitable and just punishment, rejection by the group, as he fantasied in childhood rejection by the family for infringing their code of behaviour. This story, like A<sub>2</sub> and A<sub>3</sub>, is given with more affect and pressure of speech.

The colour group situation shows an intellectualizing role, persuading others that authority is not to be trusted, for it does not honour its responsibilities. This is the unconscious expectancy he puts upon people in authority; it is they who are responsible for his unfortunate situation and for his angry feelings. He is angry with a part of himself that is loyal to authority, the part of him which is dependent in contrast to the part which is angry because of his unsatisfied childhood dependence. In the story his intellectual efforts achieve a measure of success in justifying the correctness of his attitudes.

In all three stories in this series aggressive fantasies show nearer the surface. The defensive efforts to deny, control or otherwise cover these unconscious feelings are less effective than in other stories. Depression (loss of, or destruction of object), rejection by the group, or a break-through of irrational feeling that all authority is bad and unreliable come dangerously near the surface.

### *Response to blank card*

This is the kind of environmental situation he would create for



himself to provide a maximum of gratification with the minimum of anxiety-producing possibilities.

It is an idealized home situation, a perfect home with perfect family relations. Everyone fulfilling their separate and proper role, the woman as provider of specially good food, the man as the repairer of anything wrong, the children playing together in harmony, the boy slightly older than the girl. The story as a piece of work is well woven and effective. In the context of the previous stories, the emphasis on perfection in human relations is very much exaggerated.

It is hypothesized that the above summary contains some of the main phantasies and defences which will be met in psychotherapy. Consideration of the negative content suggests that strong Oedipal conflicts involving rivalry with the father may be superimposed upon the earlier conflicts arising from frustrations of more basic dependent needs. The mother has taken over the phantasy role of frustrator of his sexual needs as well as of his early dependent needs. In the marital situation his anxieties may have become intensified, and his reparative efforts as part of his obsessional defences are not sufficiently effective, as shown particularly in his responses to cards AG, BG, CG. The development of physical symptoms is, perhaps, a further defensive effort to control aggressive feelings and avoid more depressive anxiety. They also serve in helping him to obtain attention because of them and they provide an objective excuse for inadequacy in work and family relations.

## 2

*Female, aged 51*

*Married: with two children*

*Average ability (Wechsler Verbal Scale)*

The patient was the fourth child in a family of seven, all girls except the youngest. She was separated from her mother at the age of two and placed in the care of a Child Welfare Society.

She complains that it is impossible for her to cope with heavy work, and that she cannot walk far because of feelings of exhaustion.

## SHORTER CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF USE OF TECHNIQUE

After any effort she becomes hysterical, with paralysis in her legs, her head and stomach "become bad" and her sight goes, although not for long. She has had all sorts of operations and any number of drugs. She has also been treated by insulin, electrical shock and some kind of narcosis without benefit.

### *Behaviour during the interview*

She sits on the edge of the chair and speaks in a very "proper" and dutiful manner. Everything is referred to herself. Before the test is started she seeks opportunity to talk about her difficulties; she obviously enjoys doing this, and though the first emphasis is on the goodness of herself and others, a note of complaint comes through very frequently. She is full of gratitude on the surface for any attention and in anticipation of any help with her problems. There are no aggressive manifestations in her surface behaviour and manner of speaking.

She uses cut-off gestures to emphasize her points. She shows no insight into what she is doing or what her performance in the test might mean. Her attitude is one of complete dependence, and she enjoys the opportunity of showing her good intentions and her good feelings for others by the side of her many difficulties and complaints.

### *Test Protocol*

At

Seems to be looking into the distance—wondering what to do, or what is going to happen. Looks to me like a man and at the side; it looks as if it might be a church. There is something in the corner—like a figure—it is not bright enough to distinguish what it is.

Also it is like a small river running down there.

He is wondering if something is going to turn out right: might be that someone he is very fond of might be ill. The river looks to be so still and sort of tranquil—he is worrying, thinking.

It looks like a church—I imagine it's all going to be well—but I can't distinguish the small figure.



A<sub>2</sub>

They look like—I should think—two lovers and they look to be—should think in a little doubt. They are not certain whether things will be all right—can they go ahead—are they in a position for marriage? Looks to me as if they can't make their minds up—about whether they want to do so. Yet seems light at the back. Even the light shows that whatever they want to do will be right.

C<sub>3</sub>

Looks to be an old lady—don't know if that is an empty chair or if there is a figure there: yes, it seems to be a figure. (Dramatic lively manner of speaking.) I should think the husband is on the opposite side. It is a poor dwelling but I should think they are very happy. I think they're discussing something by the way she appears to be looking at him. I couldn't say what. Maybe the food—there isn't much on the table. She is sorry she hasn't any more to give him. They probably haven't sufficient money and I should think what they get, as old people drawing pensions—the pensions are not going far for them to get enough.

I don't see anything can happen—can't do better than she's doing—can't make it go further. She is very serious—sorry for him or worried.

B<sub>3</sub>

I can't say what that really denotes. He seems to be comforting her or something. I think she's nervous of going out of that room—he's assuring her—comforting her, telling her it will be all right. Hard to say why she is nervous, it is not a hospital—he doesn't look to be in the clothes. There is something in the room she doesn't like. Apart from the dress I think she's going to have something done—something to do with a hospital. I should think it turns out all right—she has got someone who has a great interest in her. Because she knows he wants her and wants her to get well, then she will get well. (*Can you say more about this man?*) I think he's her husband—I definitely think so.

AG

I can't distinguish that—it's a number of people. I can't imagine what it might be, doctor. Doesn't seem clear enough.

(Rejects.)

Br

That looks like someone coming up to a very empty room I should think. There is a drabness about it, a coldness. It is like a man, hands in his pockets. I think he's very—not happy. There seems such an atmosphere about the room. There is a terrible emptiness there—no comfort, nothing to look forward to. I'd say he's lonely—very lonely. If he's single there is only one thing and that is to find someone who'll love him and look after him. If it's because someone's left him, his wife probably, his greatest thing is to do his utmost to get her back, make it up. Either he has lost someone—his parents—and is just lonely or someone has left him—or he looks very sad.

CG

I can't make out much of that. It is definitely a staircase—there are people all at the bottom—what that staircase is for I don't know. It is in a station or something because it is broad. And there is a shadow so it must be sunshine or light. All the people seem to be looking up—I can't think what they are looking for. Maybe someone is falling because one person has an arm up—as if saying, "If only I could stop him." Maybe it is that. I can't say any more, doctor. (*Can you imagine what might happen next?*) He's coming head downwards so he's sure to be injured. I can't see how it can be otherwise, unless the crowd breaks his fall.

A<sub>3</sub>

That's dim again. They look to be men. The two seem to be conversing; the other is passing by—not interested it seems. One is definitely talking to the other one, I should think. They all look very gloomy—maybe that they are discussing something that's going on. Probably to do with the world as it is to-day. Being men that's what they might be talking about. I don't know what else to



say. The other one is not interested—not bothering about doing anything. He is strolling along—nothing to bother about. Like a man who doesn't worry, so long as he's all right.

B<sub>2</sub>

Now that's a tree and two people standing under it. I should think there's a storm, and yet it can't be a storm because there is a shadow on the ground and therefore there must be sunshine there. So they must be standing there talking. Probably they've met in a short interval, so that's their meeting place. The house looks poor; the curtains don't look very good—they are not up properly—they are drooping. Even though they are poor they could be up straight. It would make the appearance look different and so be better inside as well as out. (*Can you say any more about these people?*) I should think they're arranging a meeting—to go out together—or she's looking up at him. She looks to be serious. Maybe she is telling him she can't keep the appointment. He wants to go out and she's probably saying she can't manage it. (*How does it turn out?*) It's difficult—if he's willing to wait things will probably turn out all right.

E<sub>3</sub>

I don't know what to say about that, doctor—I think it is a—nothing I've seen in England. Probably abroad. I think they are tourists, sightseeing, exploring. Yes, that's all I can make out of it, doctor. Because that one—well, it looks just like a statue—it's—it may be that or it may be even—no—I was going to say it might be sort of—at a pithead. I don't know whether they were anxious, waiting for news. I don't know how a pithead is, so perhaps it couldn't be that. It would be more rough at a pithead.

C<sub>2</sub>

No, *that* I can't distinguish. I think it is a lady. It is old-fashioned times, by the bed. Can't really say, doctor—there is somebody there, the bed isn't flat—it is humped in the middle. Maybe someone is ill and the lady is coming to see her. She has a fur coat, yet the room is too poor for a fur coat unless it's someone who knows them. It is not an ordinary coat. There is not a lot to see to

distinguish why she is ill—maybe it is someone old who can't get about. It is olden times because of the bedstead. It can't be a baby born—she wouldn't be quite left alone like that. Perhaps it is someone old and the lady has come to visit her to cheer her up. (*How will it turn out in the end?*) Well, I think somehow it is someone old and probably she will die.

Cr

It is like a living-room—because—well, the table is laid for something—for not very much. Only for one person because there is only one chair. There is not much on the table. I should think it's more modern by the type of window. Shouldn't think whoever lives there—or if someone is looking after the room—that they're very tidy, because of the towel on the chair. There is no comfort there. It looks to be very cold—no warmth in the place. If they could have a few flowers on the table it would make it brigher, even if they haven't got much. It is someone who lives alone there, doctor. Just come home to something—not very comfortable or warm. There is too much coldness about the place. There is nothing dirty but even so—there could be a warmth—a few flowers and the towel hung up and a bit of fire.

Blank

I'd draw a bungalow—a wee garden, not too large, but I would have it large enough that I could have chickens and fruit trees. I'd not have it set, doctor—I'd have flowers, natural flowers to come up as they wanted to. I like things natural and so you are not afraid you are going to step on it—so as you can enjoy it. I'd definitely have animals. It would be in the country, not too quiet a place; the sort of place where you see people. I don't like to be alone and where you couldn't get in easy distance to the shops, because I like the brightness of shops. I shouldn't want an elaborate bungalow; just a small one with sufficient room; on the modern style because it's not such terrible hard work—so I'd have a little leisure. Comfortable—comfortable—nice but homely. Not like you'd be afraid to sit down in it. I like things nice but comfort with it. (*Gives this story with impressive rather dramatic tone and expression.*)



# ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STORIES

## Brief Schematic Analysis of the Stories

### One-Person Situation

### Two-Person Situation

*Man:* worrying.  
*Object:* ill.

*Anxiety:* loss of object.

*Defences:* repression, denial,  
can't see.

**A.** *Outcome:* doubtfully imagined  
positive outcome.

*Surface:* serious tone, good  
feelings emphasized.  
Complaint about the  
picture.

*Lovers:* not differentiated, in-  
decision about mar-  
riage.

*Anxiety:* concerning sexual  
partnership.

*Defences:* denial of real conflict  
and its nature?

*Outcome:* facile, wish fulfilment  
by denial. Look for  
magical signs.

*Surface:* serious tone, good in-  
tentions emphasized.  
A brief, evasive story.

*Man:* lonely, sad, terribly  
empty.

*Object:* deserted or died.

*Anxiety:* loss of object.

*Defences:* effort to get object  
back—to make the  
object "good".

**B.** Repression of all  
angry feeling.

*Outcome:* None.

*Surface:* Expression of poverty  
and loneliness, help-  
lessness. Show only  
good feelings and  
intentions.

*Man:* must wait.

*Woman:* putting off meeting  
(heterosexual relation).

*Anxiety:* concerning aggressive  
sexual phantasies  
(storm).

*Defences:* control others, the  
man, the environment.  
Deny aggression.

*Outcome:* none attempted: con-  
ditional on man's  
tolerance of testing  
out.

*Surface:* show of concern with  
good feelings (sun-  
shine), with good con-  
structive efforts (nice  
appearances). Em-  
phasis is really on  
complaints about en-  
vironment.

# SHORTER CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF USE OF TECHNIQUE

## Brief Schematic Analysis of the Stories

	One-Person Situation	Two-Person Situation
C.	<i>Person:</i> alone, little food or comfort, untidy.	<i>Woman:</i> old, dying, not young and fruitful.
	<i>Anxiety:</i> concerning feelings of emptiness and lack of warmth, and aggressive feelings resulting from deprivation.	<i>Woman:</i> "better class", helpful.
	<i>Defences:</i> denial of these feelings concerned with detail and appearances.	<i>Anxiety:</i> concerning lack of attention and resulting angry feelings (denied).
	<i>Outcome:</i> none achieved. No activity or interaction with others.	<i>Defences:</i> deny aggressive and greedy feelings. Reparative efforts.
	<i>Surface:</i> a fussy attention to detail and appearances which hides a quarrelling, negative attitude.	<i>Outcome:</i> negative destructive. <i>Surface:</i> careful attention to detail and appearances. "Reasonable" evasiveness. Show of good feelings and concern for the helpless. Tone of inevitability.

	Three-Person Situation	Group Situation
A.	<i>Two men:</i> not differentiated. Engaged with exclusive adult matters.	Picture rejected.
	<i>Man:</i> neglected, pretends he is not concerned.	<i>A Number of people.</i>
	<i>Anxiety:</i> rejection, neglect.	<i>Anxiety:</i> no evidence.
	<i>Defences:</i> deny angry feelings. Avoid heterosexual rivalry situation. Pretend indifference.	<i>Defences:</i> avoidance, inability to see: blame lack of clear definition, i.e. lack of cues, supports.
	<i>Outcome:</i> negative: reject others, follow own interests.	<i>Surface:</i> complaint that the picture is not clear.
	<i>Surface:</i> underlying angry feelings and contempt of men or others who do not show concern for her interests are well covered.	



# ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STORIES

## Brief Schematic Analysis of the Stories

Three-Person Situation	Group Situation
<p><b>B.</b></p> <p><i>Man:</i> comforts, reassures woman</p> <p><i>Woman:</i> nervous, fearful, needs affection and protection, barter health for affection.</p> <p><i>(Third figure omitted in the story)</i></p> <p><i>Anxiety:</i> loss of support and affection, physical hurt.</p> <p><i>Defences:</i> physical symptoms, helplessness, repress aggressive feeling.</p> <p><i>Outcome:</i> get well if assured of affection.</p> <p><i>Surface:</i> very serious tone, emphasizing need for and attempt to make good sympathetic relations.</p>	<p><i>Group:</i> tourists or people at pithead.</p> <p><i>Statue:</i> (not related to other figures).</p> <p><i>Anxiety:</i> concerning control of aggressive feelings, loss of object.</p> <p><i>Defences:</i> deny the feelings are a part of her experience. Emphasize more constructive intentions.</p> <p><i>Outcome:</i> none: evasion. Emphasis on possible injury or destruction.</p> <p><i>Surface:</i> tense careful build-up of situation. Avoiding the reality situation in stimulus, by little or no attention to the single figure and pleading ignorance.</p>
<p><b>C.</b></p> <p><i>Man:</i> deprived, little individuality.</p> <p><i>Woman:</i> in poverty; no food to give.</p> <p><i>(Third figure omitted in the story)</i></p> <p><i>Anxiety:</i> own inadequacy: ? rejection by object.</p> <p><i>Defences:</i> blame external circumstances, deny responsibility.</p> <p><i>Outcome:</i> none.</p> <p><i>Surface:</i> serious concern for others—to appear to have good intentions. More lively and demonstrative manner of giving the story. Complaint about poverty.</p>	<p><i>Man:</i> falling, in danger of destruction or injury.</p> <p><i>Group:</i> uncertain of ability to prevent injury.</p> <p><i>Anxiety:</i> destruction of object, loss of support (? sexual setting, station).</p> <p><i>Defences:</i> helplessness in spite of good intentions: deny responsibility.</p> <p><i>Outcome:</i> negative, destruction.</p> <p><i>Surface:</i> serious concern for others, good protective efforts, uncertainty and evasiveness.</p>

*Comment on the response to the blank card*

The world she makes for herself is an ideal home: the environment is just right, and the setting is one in which she can enjoy natural outlets without anything getting out of control and without harming anything. Dependence upon others is emphasized, as is the need for affectional relations. She needs to have people about but prefers to have animals in the home. In other words capacity for human relations is on a childlike level, and the give and take of more mature relations is something she cannot attain. The emphasis is very markedly on comfort. The tone in which the story is given shows that this setting and her description of it is regarded by her as a constructive effort.

*Summary*

On the surface she emphasizes good appearances, good feeling and intentions. Underlying aggressive wishes, which are denied, show through this façade in her repeated criticisms of others and of the environment, and in at least six of the stories more directly in the story content and outcome.

The outcome of nine of the stories is negative, one picture is rejected, and for the two others the ending is a rather facile wish fulfilment, denying the reality of the real issues involved. Only in response to the Blank card is anything of a positive achievement made and the analysis of the story in its context reveals how self-centred and immature this effort is.

The attempt to win affection and make secure relations with others is a dominant theme in many stories, and by the side of this effort is the complaint that the environment is cold, drab, ungenerous and lacking in the basic necessities. This is a projection of her own feelings of emptiness and unworthiness. Basically there is nothing good and loving within her and therefore the world outside is also like that.

The very intense angry and destructive phantasies which appear to have resulted from early frustration of dependent needs are firmly denied and repressed. Their content is rarely apparent in the stories, but their effect shows through in the quality of the achievement, particularly in terms of human relations. She has little ability to see others as they really are, with individualities different



## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STORIES

from her own. Her world is peopled very largely in terms of her own inner world of objects—and they are predominantly bad objects.

Repressive mechanisms, in particular relating to sexual feelings and relationships, play an important part in keeping in check these deeper destructive forces. In responses to two of the three-person situations she omits the third figure, as a way of avoiding the Oedipal conflict situation. This omission represents the unconscious wish to destroy any rival for attention, acted out in manifest behaviour.<sup>1</sup> Similarly considerable doubt and anxiety is shown about sexual relations, for example in stories A2 and B2. Hysterical mechanisms which are a part of these defensive systems include physical symptoms which emphasize her helplessness and at the same time minimize the possibility of aggressive feelings being expressed more directly. Difficulty in seeing well, which occurs in dealing with two or three of the pictures, is probably a defence against becoming involved in situations which would match too closely early frustration situations. In this way the symptom helps her avoid very intense anxieties and possibly depression. (The one rejection is to card AG which commonly stirs depressive phantasies.)

That she sees the world of people and of things so much in terms of her own inner world of bad, frustrating, unreliable and unloving objects, even when external reality gives definite assurances of warmth and security (as in C1) suggests a possibility of a breakdown to a more paranoid condition.

### 3

*Male. Aged 24*

*Married: Accounts clerk in a small firm*  
*Superior ability (Wechsler Verbal Scale)*

The youngest of three children. The elder one, a brother, died when the patient was four. His sister is two years older. Complains

<sup>1</sup> These unusual perceptions represent clear examples of the structuring of the perceptual field very directly in terms of the unconscious wished-for relations. In the response to the other three-person picture, A3, a variation of this demand for exclusive attention is shown: here with less repression and dissociation from the aggressive intention and with a little more modification by ego defences.

SHORTER CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF USE OF TECHNIQUE  
of premature ejaculation and expresses anxiety that his wife may consequently reject him.

*Behaviour before and during the test*

A man of slightly below average height and of rather slight build. On the surface he makes a pleasant, easy contact, though one felt there was something smug, and perhaps at bottom defiant in the kind of relationship he tried to build up in the interview. He speaks in a very soft voice, responding quietly and fluently in discussion and in giving the stories. His main interests are given as reading—especially in bed—stories of the barbarian invasions and conquests. He also enjoys cooking. He has given up an earlier interest in sports since his marriage.

*Test Protocol*

A1. 5"

Two things—someone standing on the edge of a moor, watching a waterfall, seen on right corner; the wife is sitting down here; or other thing, somebody going into a church. Somebody sitting in a pew on right side; man walking down aisle. The centre figure is doing what I should be doing—just standing and watching. From his attitude I should say he is rather awed—wonderful. Things waterfalls, always make me feel the same way. The grandeur in the scenery makes me feel insignificant. When you see mountains and things you feel rather minute and trivial. He's very strongly built by the look of it—broad shoulders, thin waist and hips by comparison. Manual worker or athlete by description. He somehow gives you the impression of being a deep thinker and appreciator of beauty in some respect. Somehow his build contradicts that, but his attitude suggests he might be. I'd feel thoughtful and go away thinking of my insignificance.

A2. 2"

This looks like a pair of lovers facing a lake with a castle and island in the middle. From their attitude I should think they are going to get into a boat and go over to the island. What do they do when they get there? Of course we are on a romantic theme—



lovers and castles—castles imply a banquet but by the look of the girl's dress she doesn't have a banquet. It certainly looks like a castle in Hans Andersen. I'm just wondering whether I've got it all wrong, and it's Styx, and Charon is going to ferry them over—in which case I'd not like to contemplate what would happen to them. I should think they are of some fairly wealthy—the girl looks as if she has a strapless evening gown on. I don't like the look of the fellow very much, he looks to have a—scientist in youth's books with electrons clamped over his ears, and a big head. She looks a nice girl but I don't admire her company. From the look of him, I don't imagine it will turn out well; would you like a cigarette, doctor? I'd not trust him in a castle and him (me?) a man.

## C3. 5"

It looks a very peculiar situation—like a library with a nice roaring fire. The character on the left looks like a Roman in a rather ragged toga, and the one on the right looks like a—I'm trying to make up my mind what he has—probably it's an old Victorian lady I should think. The one standing up looks as if he's feeling a bit cold and is standing in front of a fire—probably he went round the table for a warm. That would be a strange conversation.—Roman in a toga, old-fashioned Victorian lady and a walking iceberg. I think that would be very amusing. Our Roman friend looks as if typical and is rather laying the law down—he looks as if he'd like to have someone thrown to the lions—he can't because it's a drawing-room. Probably he went out in a huff—couldn't get his own way. The other chap looks disinterested in the whole thing—maybe he's looking at the picture on the wall—I can't make it out. He's disinterested about what's going on between the other two. She looks rather startled as if what hero on the left is saying puts the breeze up her. I think he's being very truculent and he's startled the Victorian lady. Ill-assorted trio. I can't understand why they are sitting drinking tea—or is it coffee?

## B3. 7"

H'm. I assume that the man and the girl have just come back from a fancy dress ball—it's more like an historical garb—there's a



## SHORTER CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF USE OF TECHNIQUE

bustled effect with her. They are very affectionate towards one another. She lives in a sumptuous place—probably it's the door of a block of flats where he sees her. There's another person there. She's trying to keep out of the way—to see without being seen. She's taking the whole thing in. She seems too stiff and rigid to be inquisitive—maybe it's blackmail—foreboding of trouble. Without that one it seems a nice effect. I think he'll kiss her goodnight and she'll go in and there will be tittle-tattle from the neighbours in the morning when the other one has spread it around a bit.

### AG. 8"

An early morning scene in an industrial town. The three figures on the left look as if they've just set out for work. It's a nasty cold morning. They look unhappy and dejected. The other three look fresh and bright as if they've been up a time—they've come off the night shift and are pulling the legs of those who've just got up. They'll return a grumpy answer and go to work feeling sorry for themselves.

### BI. 10"

H'm. It doesn't really convey a great deal. It looks like a single man's bedroom—not too affluent circumstances. His mother has put his dressing-gown out—he's got the landing light on and looks as if he's coming home from a convivial evening—nice time—the rest of the household have been in bed a considerable time—probably he's inconsiderate, switching the light on. He's come to bed and probably he'll wake up in the morning not having time to shave. I've got the idea he'll ride to work—I can't think why—it's not a happy thing to go to work on a bike after a thick night. Why the idea of bicycles is conveyed I've not the least idea.

### CG. 5"

If it were not for this chap up top I'd say it was a gang of pirates with a plank—and I would have said he was walking along it, but this shadow up top looks out of alignment with the plank. This gentleman looks incensed and as if he thinks this one ought to have to walk the plank. But I can't get this one at the top—seems a



disembodied entity to me—I can't get him at all. I suppose only other thing—they were building a house and having an argument—political—on the ground while they wait for tiles on top. The one on the right is a Communist shouting what he has to say and then walking away, still leaving the chap on the top waiting for tiles. You never know when political arguments are going to stop—that's the worst of them.

## A3. 7"

I think I may be led astray by the etching on the white background—it looks like early morning—gloom and death. It looks like three people in a very solemn attitude round a grave or something—dejected or sorrowful about something. They've come to graveside a few days after the death of a relative and haven't got over their sorrow for one that's dead, and are feeling sorry for themselves as well. Probably they'll go home and sit around a fire—probably they'll not say anything to each other for hours—feel thoroughly morbid. I'll make myself cry if we go on like this any longer. This side there's a man and his wife—and this side, it seems there should be a woman but what her relation to the one that's dead is I don't know. Sister of a dead son perhaps.

## B2. 2"

"Never darken my doors again." It's like a house in a suburban neighbourhood. It's a good class house with a garden, a tree and bush, and a clandestine meeting between the daughter of the house and a young man. I'll say her father's found out and he's hurrying down the stairs and the young man is for it when the father gets down below. It turns out badly for both. She'll get her behind spanked. If the father had a shot gun—I don't know what will happen to the chap. He'll not get off lightly. But he's quite a big chap and may give an account of himself, and the father may admonish only by words. By the look of the tree, he looks to be about 6 ft. tall and not many men of fifty would tackle a man 6 ft. tall.

## BG. 5"

H'm. I don't quite know—it looks like a road with a pathway. Five people conversing in one group and one very ostracized. I

can't make out what the structure is—it's not strong enough for a bridge—maybe it's arches in a wall. The tallest one of the five looks the centre of attraction, the one on the right looks dubious about him. The two on the left are like somebody talking to a teacher or someone superior. The one on the right looks as if she'd like to get into the group but stands on her own—she's afraid to do so. The centre of these five holds some fascination for her but she can't pluck up courage. She'll go away in a minute—feel very morbid and wish she were self-assertive and could join the group. The centre of the group looks full of his own importance—conceited and knows his position. The two that don't look so interested were fascinated by him at one time but have got over it and feel a bit doubtful of him.

## C2. 2"

It looks like a very fat gentleman lying in bed, probably got curtains drawn and I'd think the manservant has just thrown open the door and is about to wake him up and say breakfast is ready—if he's got a cup of tea he's left-handed. I always associate corpulent gentlemen as irascible—probably he won't be very pleased—turns over and goes to sleep. He won't show consideration for the man-servant. He looks as though he's a great reader in bed—maybe reading into the small hours—that's why he doesn't like waking up—like me.

## C1. 2"

A country cottage—looks as though the meal is set for in the kitchen. Someone just coming in—maybe they've been out labouring in the morning—a farm labourer. It conveys the impression that the wife is ill, or isn't there. I don't think she'd leave the cloth on the chair and there's no meal prepared. He hadn't time to tidy up. He's going to eat or has eaten in the kitchen. He'll just come in, put his dirty crocks on the draining board, just have a bottle of beer, pickled onions and cheese for lunch. It doesn't look as if he's caring for himself or the house very well. If he's any time left he'll go out and do something else—not stop to tidy the place up. He conveys the impression he is lazy. The kitchen isn't well ordered.



Blank. 7"

On the left here we have a city—to the centre of the card there would be a soldier on a horse in sort of armour and ornamental trappings. He has a large retinue about him, and over on the extreme right is the army. Coming out of the city gates I imagine a troop of men in dress like Franciscan monks coming out in humility to surrender the city to the knight in shining armour. The city is not besieged at all—they've just surrendered the city, probably because they don't like its form of government, perhaps because they like the look of this knight; they surrender with dignity. He will accept their surrender—he will not molest them or plunder. He will stay a little while, then pursue the governors of the country and set up a more reasonable form of government.

### *Comment on the Performance*

#### *Some general characteristics of the story productions*

The activity described in the stories is predominantly passive. This is the case in all the stories except for the phantasy produced in response to the blank card. In six of the stories, however, A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>, there are clear references to the wish for a more active role or for the ability to take such a role. In these six stories there is a mixture of passivity and ineffectiveness with phantasy roles, which either offset feelings of inadequacy directly, e.g. A<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>, or which hint at wishes to dominate in some way.

In four of the stories there is something of an imposing start which peters out into conflict and inactivity. Underlying conflicts and contradictions shown in these stories. A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>3</sub> and C<sub>6</sub> are incapable of resolution and there is no positive activity or outcome. These contradictions are shown clearly also in his perception of the pictures A<sub>1</sub>, C<sub>3</sub> and C<sub>6</sub>. The pattern is similar in A<sub>2</sub>. Here a phantasy relationship with a woman is built up as a start for the story. The suggestion is that it is a Hans Andersen prince taking his princess to a castle. But underlying phantasy relations are put on to the picture stimulus which make a satisfactory outcome impossible. First the woman is seen as dressed unsuitably



for a banquet; then comes the anxiety that this fairy-tale relationship is false, or threatened, and likely to give way to a relationship in which the woman is in danger. A further attempt to restore the original phantasy relationship is probably made with the perception of the woman as wealthy and in a strapless evening gown. This in turn is quickly dominated by underlying phantasies of a sinister man—an elaborated very unusual perception of the picture—who is dangerous (sexually?) to the woman. The comment at the end of the story suggests the patient's strong identification with the woman and that he shares the fear of this sinister male.

Except for stories B<sub>2</sub> and Blank there is no positive outcome to the situations described. In the latter case the story is clearly a phantasy story; this is the world he creates, and his role within it, in which this dominant tension system may be worked through to some satisfying solution. The setting is in the past; the role is that of the powerful but benevolent conqueror who imposes his own way of governing his object, the city which has given in without opposition. In the former story, B<sub>2</sub>, the man resists attack and protects the woman only if he is clearly more powerful physically, or, in the other role, gives in readily if the opponent is stronger. On the basis of the performance in the stories it is suggested, therefore, that he can only take up an active positive attitude when he is assured of success; the alternative is a passive ineffective attitude mixed with smug indifference as in B<sub>3</sub> and B<sub>G</sub>. There are also hints of a self-centred attitude involving lack of concern and some contempt for those who serve his needs, e.g. in B<sub>1</sub>, B<sub>G</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>1</sub>.

The indulgence in a phantasy life, which from the evidence of the stories involves the domination over his objects and perhaps at deeper levels omnipotent sexual and aggressive relationships, is linked with a dependent demanding relationship in which his basic needs for comfort and food are served without any demands being made upon him in return. Where such demands are made as in B<sub>1</sub> or A<sub>G</sub>, that he must leave the comforts of this dependent relationship and work, the feeling is one of resentment. In B<sub>1</sub> this feeling is associated with the compulsively introduced idea of the bicycle, perhaps a reference to masturbation; in A<sub>G</sub> the friendly



leg-pulling between the men who have had to leave their beds and those who have finished work, hides the feelings of dejection and resentment. In the story for C<sub>2</sub>, the role is that of an irritable inconsiderate man who requires that his comforts and needs are served without any interruption of his phantasy enjoyment. That the servant is a man probably represents an avoidance of any sexual demands being made, for such demands must be kept separate from the indulgence of dependent needs and related phantasy gratifications.

### *Relationships with men*

Evidence for relations with men comes directly from A<sub>2</sub>, A<sub>G</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>G</sub>, C<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>3</sub>, C<sub>G</sub> and Blank. He is afraid of men who might be intellectually superior or physically stronger, and there is an indication that the fear is of sexual attack. He would like to be in a position of strength and of popularity, but is afraid to assume such a position or to challenge others to attain it. He will tend to belittle authority and the success of others. This he will do vicariously, not by any direct challenge. On the surface he will be passive and compliant, showing his independence and defiance in a rather boasting and perhaps jocular manner, and emphasizing his lack of effort and ability to get by, as an achievement on his part. Underneath there are phantasies of omnipotence in which other men readily sue for mercy and allow him all he wants.

### *Relationships with women*

On the surface he is passive and dependent. Women are necessary to him, though, as he shows in several of the stories, he can allow them little individuality of their own. He seeks most of all a childlike, exclusive relation with women, one in which all his comforts and basic needs are looked after and no demands made in return. He is conscious of being inconsiderate and self-centred, but far from doing anything about it, regards it as an indication of his importance that he gets away with it. Any demands upon him which take him away from this dependent, comfortable relationship make him dejected and resentful. He adopts a rather helpless, but defiant and masochistic tone and mode of behaviour when the woman is not available to serve his needs.

In order to preserve the woman from phantasied aggressive sexual attack, in part of himself he idealizes her. He keeps separate from his relations with women his aggressive phantasies, perhaps because he fears to damage the object he is dependent upon, and perhaps because in phantasy sexuality is dangerous to him. At the same time his omnipotent sexual phantasy relation with women is part and parcel of his childlike dependent relation with them; both must be indulged at the expense of any more mature give and take relations which would typify an adult sexual partnership. There are some suggestions that he experiences occasional bursts of self-pity at the thought of losing the ideal dependent relationship he needs, or because he feels he may never really secure such a relationship. In part of his phantasy he is identified with the older brother, who is mourned by his parents, in another part of himself he is probably guilty at taking this brother's place.

#### *Relationship with men and women together*

The main effort here is to achieve an exclusive dependent relationship with the woman, but without challenging the man. In B<sub>1</sub> there is a clear indication of the wish to disturb the parents' sleep (such wishes probably represent a part of the content of the masturbation phantasy symbolized in this story). In B<sub>2</sub> the emphasis is first on a secret sexual exploit, the anxiety being that the rival will punish the woman (with whom he is partly identified), or surprise and attack him. In C<sub>3</sub>, and possibly in C<sub>6</sub> also, the patient shows a preoccupation with the relations of the parent figures. The phantasy is probably of sadistic sexual relations and the only role he can take is one of indifference. In C<sub>3</sub> all aggressive wishes must be excluded from the woman's presence, though in part of himself he identifies with the powerful Roman who upsets her by threatening to throw someone to the lions. In three-person heterosexual situations he will avoid rivalry at all costs, by adopting a pose of indifference, by cutting out all feeling, or by pretending to focus his interests elsewhere.

#### *Summary*

This is a man of superior ability whose effectiveness in life is



considerably below that level. A very large proportion of his resources is taken up with a rich compulsive phantasy life, in which he attempts to keep separate omnipotent sexual wishes from his dependent childlike relation with woman. At the same time these phantasies are designed to avoid the need to challenge the male rival for his relationship with the woman. A heterosexual relation at an adult level is impossible for him, partly because such a relation in reality, as distinct from his omnipotent phantasy, would result in his aggressive wishes damaging the woman, and partly because he fears punishment for such wishes from male authorities.

In order to avoid facing his inner conflicts, and in particular deep-seated anxieties concerning his unconscious aggressive phantasies, while yet assuring that his dependent needs are met, he must accept a low level of satisfaction and achievement in work and in marital relations; he must be passive and non-competitive and above all he must avoid any deep involvement with others, maintaining a detached and rather affectless attitude. This more surface picture of himself is made more acceptable to others by his easy response, his compliance and superficial friendliness; it is more acceptable to himself by reason of his intellectual façade, his pose of indifference and his illusion that he will always get what he wants without effort on his part.

His feelings of inadequacy are quite near the surface, but rather than face anxieties on that account he will select his environment and the people he has contact with so that he avoids this challenge. In the same way, in his responses to the pictures in this series, he selects for attention those features of the stimulus situation which fit his phantasy needs and justify his defensive efforts. So long as he can get by with his smug self-centred attitudes and assure for himself the satisfaction of his dependent needs and a base in which he can indulge his phantasy life, he will make little effort to change. If these gains are threatened the prognosis may be more hopeful, although it is not unlikely that he would seek to retain the comforts of a dependent relation with men, or with women, by some other means, for example, by demonstrating his helplessness and need for attention through illness.

*Male. Aged 48*  
*Married: Small Shop Keeper*  
*Superior Ability (Wechsler Verbal Scale)*  
*Elder of 2 Children*

Complains of sleeplessness and "heart trouble", the latter dating from his mother's death of coronary thrombosis three years ago. Also complains of aches and pains, particularly on the left side, faintness, tingling, pins and needles, noises in head. He fears that sexual activity will strain his heart.

He expressed dissatisfaction with his socio-economic position in life, and only reluctantly accepts circumstances as they are. He would really like to be a dental surgeon.

*Behaviour during the test*

At first contact he appeared resistant, and although professing willingness to undergo a psychiatric examination he expressed his hostility by criticizing his previous psychiatric treatment. He had had about ten sessions of narco-analysis, this having terminated, so he says, on account of his "resistance". He thinks the treatment was a waste of time.

His behaviour in the test followed the same pattern of a superficial show of co-operation, contrasted with very strong underlying resistance. There is a good deal of defensive manoeuvring in some stories, and he seemed to be avoiding a deep involvement of his personality in the task.

*Test Protocol*

AI. 10"

A man looking at a church. (Long pause. Asks for repeat of instructions.) He's in dire trouble, and is trying to get some sort of easement in his mind by looking at something that might help him. (Pause.) I think he is standing on a—looking into space, and hoping that what he is seeking will come to light. (*Can you enlarge*



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on this?) You would have to be a genius to know from this drawing. There is very little I can build up on this. (Laughs.) (Outcome?) Probably he gets to the bottom of his troubles, and goes away a happy man. (Self-satisfied smile.)

A2. 5"

You're rather fond of church scenes, aren't you? It is obviously two women telling each other their troubles. One is giving the other a lecture—a talking to. I imagine that the first is a mother, and the other her daughter. She is confiding to her mother what she wants to do, and the mother is giving her something of her experience—and they live happy ever after. (What sort of trouble was it?) Perhaps leaving work—or perhaps about a young man. Yes, I think that's most probable.

C3. 25"

This is probably the parents giving their son a good lecture. There is a terrific discussion going on re his way of life. The parents are not satisfied with the way he's living. It is of little avail, as he decides to run his own life and live accordingly. The point that strikes me is that the man is doing all the talking. He looks more like a judge. What he preaches he is trying to put in practice in his own family, but—these things happen in the best of families. The son takes no notice—though he should.

How am I doing?

B3. 0"

It is a love scene. This chappy is going off to the war. It is a scene that could be difficult to describe. A husband parting from his wife. The final good-bye. On the other hand this could be a statue—no, a shadow, sorry—of a couple embracing. (Long pause.) I am just beginning to think this can be an interesting topic—finding something out from these drawings. It encourages thinking. Shadow, or actual picture, it is in my opinion a husband and wife parting. The husband is going on a journey, and the wife is saying good-bye. Is there any true story for each of these pictures? (The pictures are not drawn with any particular stories in mind. You may make up any story you wish.) That means you can't tell whether I'm right or wrong?

AG. 10"

"These look like sea-lions on an island. (Long pause.) Frankly, I don't know what to make of this. This might be somebody's idea of a sketch—trying to develop something in the start of black and white. As all paintings are started in something that's difficult to see at the beginning, it might be anything.

BI. 20"

A bedroom, of course. The person coming up is apparently tired and it looks to me as if it's not a very wealthy house, and this is in the attic. A slow climb to the top. I should say he is very eager to get into bed. It is a very clean-looking room. A nurse's room, or—something to do with somebody who's not earning a lot of money. (*Outcome?*) This person goes to bed and sleeps, but not easily. Eventually sleeps and—I should say he is taking this the very hard way. It's not going to be easy to settle down in a room like this for someone who has been used to better things. (On seeing the pile of pictures he remarks, "Have we got to go right through that lot?")

CG. 70"

(Tilts card on side as if unable to achieve a clear perception of it.) Frankly, I don't know what this scene depicts, except somebody talking to another group of men. It is a Trade Union leader, giving some ideas about conditions of work. (Looks at card sideways again as if uncertain he has it the right way up.) (*Can you enlarge on this?*) I don't know what this is. Is it a wall? (referring to "steps".) The result, if it's a successful meeting, is that they go on strike. The leader is waving his arms about, telling them to demand their rights.

*Note:* Inquiry at the end of the test ascertained that the "leader" was seen as part of the group. He had not seen the solitary figure.

A3. 20"

We've had this one before, haven't we? Three men in a board room, discussing the policy of their business. There is a lot of disagreement going on. The act of standing up shows they are



getting impatient, and they are walking backwards and forwards as most people under nervous strain would do. They are three neurotics. (Laughs.) The one in the centre is the clearest thinking one—the calmest. He eventually settles them down to a point where they sit down and talk over the matter calmly again, till a policy is agreed upon. It's an important matter of policy. The firm is in great trouble. You can tell by the tension of their faces. It could be (*Pardon?*) I say, it *could* be.

D2. 10"

This can be a love scene under a tree. The height of summer. Apparently there is quite a nice conversation going on between the girl and the male. (Gets up to get matches from overcoat and lights cigarette.) The house looks foreign—France or Italy. The windows are Frenchy or Italiany—or it might be Spain. He is singing a love song to her—*sole mio*. It is a love scene anyway, under ideal conditions. (*Outcome?*) They might be married, or they might not. Married people can love each other under the shade of a tree, I don't see why they shouldn't. In walking in parks I've felt romantic with my wife, even after many years. The outcome here can be very interesting. They could be great lovers. On the other hand, it could be a casual meeting between strange people having a casual walk. They could be just talking—not romancing. It reminds me of a story in France. A girl in Paris during a trade show I was at asked me to walk with her in the lunch hour. We just walked and talked. The public might have taken the wrong impression. They might have thought we were making ardent love—but we weren't.

Bc 1.5"

It might be an old Roman city, or it might be a Greek city that has suffered the torments of war. The little group on the left seem to be in discussion about it, while the single person furthest away seems to be mourning that he's lost somebody—probably thinking and—on his own. He has been left alone to allow him to probe his own mind, and enjoy a little of the past that he may have enjoyed in this particular spot. He has suffered, more so than the others, or if he hasn't, he's taken it to heart more than the others.

(*Who is he mourning?*) A lost relation. Or perhaps he fought in this district and his best friend was killed. He might be suffering agonies at this moment.

C2. 30"

This person is entering the bedroom where there is illness. It might be. It could be that this person is so ill that—(pause). On the other hand, it may be somebody that's approaching the bedroom gingerly for some peculiar reason, and, on the other hand, there is some hesitation in going in. Possibly approaching the bedroom for—after a heavy day's work. Again, it looks Continental—the bed and chest of drawers. It is an old-fashioned house, with an old-fashioned door handle. The door has a wide aperture, so it must be old-fashioned. There are not such big doorways these days. The scene depicts some trouble in that room. It could be that a daughter might be lying in there very ill through being very—(pause) brought up badly, and her ways are not to the liking of her parents. The result might be that she is suffering through being a bad person. There is not much more I can say about that.

C1. 10"

This looks like a little cottage away back in the country. The person living in this room has a tidy mind and a lot of imagination, but owing to circumstances they can't enlarge upon it or advance any further. From the tidiness of the layout of the room it seems that the most she can do is to keep this little room as neat as possible. It is the kind of room used for many purposes—kitchen, dining-room—. She has left hurriedly, as although the room has such a neat appearance—the towel is slung over the chair, so that it doesn't go with the other tidiness of the room. Also, the person who has this room has been used to better days. The chair looks out of the ordinary. The mirror on top of the sink is something a little bit different—and various little trinkets around the room suggest a person with a little above the ordinary. That's a bit of a mouthful.  
(Requests to go to the toilet.)



Blank

How long am I to look at this for? One has to let themselves go on this, and be quite relaxed. ( $2\frac{1}{2}'$ .) I can't gather anything yet. (Laughs.) ( $3'$ .) I shall get giddy if I look at this any longer. (Puts card down on table.) Churchill came into my mind. He is going to get the country out of a pickle although we shall have to go through hardships not to the liking of the majority. I don't envy him in his position, although it must be a wonderful thought to be able to take the responsibility of the things he does at his age. It is something to be admired. Many people wouldn't be able to even start to think about taking on the job, and if they did I think they would not have the backing of the American people, and I think that in the end this country will be somewhere near normal again if we all pull our weight. But can we *trust* the majority of the people to pull their weight unless forced to? It remains to be seen.

### *Comment on the Performance*

#### *General characteristics of the stories*

1. He gave the stories with an air of self-satisfaction which was shown more in his gestures, tone of voice, etc., than in the verbal content. The "how am I doing" at the end of C<sub>3</sub> was said rhetorically, with a tone of satisfaction. His deeper feelings of inadequacy found expression after B<sub>3</sub>, when he sought reassurance that his performance was acceptable. Once this reassurance had been verbalized he recovered his previous composure and confidence.

2. Part of the same façade—the general weakness of self-criticism—is seen in the dogmatic quality of some of his comments, e.g. A<sub>2</sub> is "obviously two women". He makes poor use of the stimulus properties of this picture, describing it immediately and dogmatically as a "church scene" and then giving a story out of keeping with this perception. Thus his reactions are at times impulsive and minimally related to the reality properties of the situation. Similarly in B<sub>3</sub> he reacts immediately to a solitary aspect of the situation (reaction time zero). He builds his story entirely round the "couple embracing", paying no attention to the third figure, and giving no indication that he has assimilated the total

field situation. This inability to suspend judgement does not pervade all his stories—to some cards he shows considerable caution—and it is in the three-person situations that his cognitive appraisal of the picture is weakest (cf. A<sub>3</sub>—"We've had this one before, haven't we?") Triangular situations seem to be a problem for him.

3. Considerable guilt is shown regarding sexual relationships, and it is in stories where he is dealing with this problem that he resorts to the defensive manoeuvring mentioned above. In B<sub>2</sub> he goes to great lengths to emphasize the pure and harmless nature of his wishes towards women. The sexual potentialities of this picture arouse in him so much anxiety and guilt that he

(a) breaks off the test momentarily and gets up from his chair;

(b) puts the situation geographically at a distance—France, Spain, or Italy;

(c) emphasizes the "ideal" (i.e. unsordid) conditions of the relationship;

(d) justifies the propriety of the relationship by introducing a personal reference—indicating the degree to which this picture has stimulated his guilt;

(e) eventually denies the whole relationship by making the people "casual strangers", thus escaping from the difficulty that he had incautiously landed himself in; and finally

(f) makes a direct personal statement of his guiltlessness, though the guilt concerning his sexual phantasies is barely concealed.

In C<sub>2</sub> the sexual guilt is even more apparent. He fears that his bad sexuality has resulted in damage to himself. One feels also that he seeks this punishment as atonement for his guilt. In C<sub>3</sub> he is in conflict with father "re his way of life". He has interpreted this card as a family situation—son and parents—and ~~at one level~~ his guilt must derive from the phantasies stimulated by this situation. He is unable to give any individuality to the mother, and it is possible that this results from the intensity of his unconscious Oedipal wishes towards her. One feels also that the "how am I doing" has a more profound significance than the patient's superficial intention discussed above. At a deeper unconscious level he is perhaps saying, "Have I gone too far here in revealing some of my secret Oedipal phantasy?"



## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STORIES

4. Phantasies of deprivation ( $B_1$  and  $C_1$ ) also appear, although it is difficult to assess the depth and significance of these. There is a reluctant resignation to these circumstances, and a longing for the plenty that he has experienced in the past. The form of verbalization in these stories, particularly the references to a better situation in the past, suggest a fairly superficial problem related to anxieties about his own present effectiveness in comparison with his previous achievements.

5. When faced with an entirely unsupporting situation (the Blank card) he produces hysterical giddiness to help him out. Eventually he deals with the challenge of this situation by resorting to a potency phantasy.

### *Response to one-person situations ( $A_1$ , $B_1$ , $C_1$ ).*

His initial response to  $A_1$  was a request for support. Similarly in  $B_1$  and  $C_1$  the themes are of deprivation and inadequacy. Without support he is almost at a loss to deal with the demands made on him—after  $B_1$  he was disturbed by the amount of the task still to be done. When left to his own resources in his phantasy, i.e. without the stimulus of interaction with others, he broods on the “better days” and “better times” of long ago. He is capable of only a “slow climb”, yet he must keep up appearances and excuse himself for his inadequacies. In his solitary phantasy he compensates by thoughts of magical success in the role of a potent male (Blank card).

### *Response to two-person situations ( $A_1$ , $B_2$ , $C_2$ )*

In  $A_2$  he avoids any heterosexual possibilities of the stimulus and seeks support and approval from the mother.  $B_2$  and  $C_2$  depict his unconscious guilt regarding sexual relationships. His role is either that of the person so afraid that a relationship is excluded ( $B_2$ ) or so bad that his wishes can only result in punishment ( $C_2$ ). In two of these stories ( $A_2$  and  $C_2$ ) he identifies with a woman, and in  $B_2$  it is the woman who takes the initiative: she “asked me to walk with her”. In none of his phantasies is he able to take a masculine role in a two-person situation. In  $B_3$ , where he sees only two people, the relationship is on the point of separation.



## SHORTER CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF USE OF TECHNIQUE

### *Response to three-person situations ( $A_3$ , $B_3$ , $C_3$ )*

In both  $A_3$  and  $C_3$  the central figure is a potent male whom in one situation he defies and in the other submits to. The father-figure is on the one hand a good person on whose strength he can rely, and on the other hand a feared person who will sit in judgement on him. In the three-person situation he wishes the father to intervene as a controlling influence over his aggression.

### *Response to group situations ( $AG$ , $BG$ , $CG$ )*

There is less homogeneity in these stories. He failed to see  $AG$  as representing human figures at all. This card frequently elicits depressive phantasies, and his avoidance of the stimulus represents the extent to which he is defending against depression. Related dynamically is his perceptual blockage to  $CG$  (the "aggressive" card), and in  $BG$  he gives himself up to solitary mourning. His deeply rooted phantasies of destruction and loss break through the surface in  $BG$  in spite of his struggle for control in the previous cards.

### *General summary*

The surface impression is of a person who needs to gain approval, and who used the test situation as a means of satisfying this need. The façade of effectiveness and confidence is brittle, and does no more than gloss over his deeper feelings of inadequacy. Basically he feels inadequate in the masculine role and seeks a dependent, passive relationship. His difficulties in achieving a full masculine identification relate to his unconscious fears of his own destructiveness, particularly towards women, and these feelings derive from unresolved components of the Oedipal situation. His guilt concerning sexual wishes towards women is partly dealt with by seeking punishment, and it is probable that his neurotic symptoms serve this need. In this respect his problem is basically hysterical, although the material reveals earlier depressive components, which he is managing at the moment to keep in check. His defences are in the main adequate to master his depressive problem, but if his hysterical defences should be severely challenged in therapy it is possible that a serious depressive breakdown might occur.



*Female Age 28*  
*Single. Infant teacher*  
*Intelligence level Superior (Wechsler Verbal Scale)*  
*"Third in family of four sisters"*

Complains of difficulties at work. Unable to make relationships with children at work. Dislikes teaching but feels too old to learn anything else. "Infant teaching is very simple and is the only thing a person as stupid as me can possibly do. I don't want to work. I just want to stay around being lazy, doing nothing."

*Behaviour during test*

Very nervous—huddled up in the chair clutching her handbag and newspaper. Never became relaxed, though her manner became somewhat histrionic with a suspicion of flirtatiousness. Nonchalant attitude when speaking of her problems. Quite sure no one can help her as she is useless and lazy. Disliked cognitive testing: "I feel like a child of five. I know perfectly well how stupid I am, but I don't like having to show it."

*Test Protocol*

A1

It doesn't connect up at all. (She paused and hands card back. She is asked to describe what she sees.) It just doesn't connect to me at all. It's a shadow of a man or a woman—I can't tell which—I can't make a story out of that. It's a man or a woman just standing there. (*Who might it be?*) I can't see. It could be on solid ground with mist around it—I couldn't be definite there. It might be a man standing on the edge of the universe surveying the world.

A2

Two people contemplating the future—male and female. (Very long pause.) (*What are they thinking?*) I haven't a clue. Could be anything.

SHORTER CASE ILLUSTRATIONS OF USE OF TECHNIQUE

C<sub>3</sub>

Three people enjoying a fluid of some sort—might be coffee. They are in a room enjoying the warmth from the fire, having a nice talk. (Pause.) (*Who are they?*) I imagine they are not a family. It's three different people having a social evening together.

B<sub>3</sub>

Gruesome looking things! There's an open door, and there again two people with someone else watching. The symbolism of the opening of the door—it's a new life together. They are emigrating to a new country, or they've got married and that is a new world. It's not a father and daughter—just a man and a woman.

AG

A whole lot of women nattering together. It's a story about country women in a village showing each individual character and the parts they play in the village—six different types. You could build a story around them—just take a bunch of characters and write down things about them—show how they all fit in the general life of the village.

B<sub>1</sub>

Someone creeping upstairs to murder somebody—a nice murder story. (Long pause.) (*Can you enlarge on the story?*) I know so many stories. It could be an old lady with a lot of money, and a younger one with two mad sisters. She kills the old lady—drugs the lady and keeps her two mad sisters from going to the asylum. It's like a play I saw—"Ladies in Retirement".

CG

A crowd of people listening to some talker at election time—a crowd at the bottom of the steps. (She hands card back.)

A<sub>3</sub>

What am I supposed to say about this? It's similar to the others—it's three people. (Long pause.) (*Make up a story.*) It could be two men talking, and a third party waiting for one of the other two—standing farther aside. (She holds the card in silence for some time before returning it.)



B<sub>2</sub>

Two people taking a stroll before going in on a summer's evening. Who they are I haven't a clue. They live in the house there, and they've been out for some fresh air. They live in London—it's stuffy and hot—they've had a heat wave and they've gone out for some fresh air before going home to bed. (*Who are they?*) Two inmates of a boarding house in Hampstead.

B<sub>G</sub>

It looks like a Russian cemetery in Berlin. I'll have that as a funeral. The people have come to a funeral. It's a communal cemetery with a sentry on guard and three visitors. The funeral's over. They've come to visit the dead in their communal grave—no, they're tourists come to look around.

C<sub>2</sub>

Somebody already in bed, and another person coming up to bed for the night. If you want a story it's about this couple and their trials and tribulations.

C<sub>1</sub>

A little house in France. It's a farmer. There is no wine there, but there's a rose in the jug. The farmer's had breakfast, and he's gone out to work in the fields.

Blank

We can have the Alps or something, and two people climbing—no, three or four. They are going on a tour, and now they are climbing. Later on they climb up and someone fell, and the others have got to go and look for this person. They cannot find this person because he's gone right down a deep crevasse or some place inaccessible. They go back again and notify the relatives, and the others in the party go on having a gay holiday. (*What do they feel about this situation?*) It doesn't affect them. They are keen on climbing, and they know that accidents do happen, and anyway, they don't know this person well.

I am sorry to make you write so much!

*Brief Content Analysis of Stories*

A<sub>1</sub>

Initial rejection. Unwilling to involve her phantasy in the task. Diffuse anxiety and need for support (mist around solid ground). Puts self at a distance—surveying the world—avoids emotional involvement.

A<sub>2</sub>

Near-rejection. Disturbed by heterosexual situation. Unwilling to become involved and reveal phantasy.

C<sub>3</sub>

Seeks primitive undifferentiated sensual gratification—"fluid of some sort—warmth from fire"—good, warm, comforting breast. Avoidance of intimate family relationships (escape from disturbing Oedipal phantasy?) "Nice talk—social evening": denial of aggressive feelings?

B<sub>3</sub>

Intimate relations have sinister threatening quality. Minimal personal involvement, to avoid experiencing Oedipal guilt?—"Not father and daughter".

AG

Phantasy of bad ungratifying mother-figures. "Nattering together"—oral-aggressive relationship? "Could write a story—show how they all fit in": attempt to control these figures—obsessional control.

B<sub>1</sub>

Violent aggressive attack on bad depriving mother, "Drug", oral-aggressive attack? Can express primitive aggression against mother if she denies personal responsibility—"Ladies in Retirement"—someone else's story?

CG

Submissive relationship. Passive in relation to powerful father?



## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STORIES

A<sub>3</sub>

All-male situation (cf. difficulty with Oedipal situations in B<sub>2</sub> and C<sub>3</sub>). Seeks relationship with one parent—"one of the other two"—but cannot express any feeling. Afraid to initiate action.

B<sub>2</sub>

Seeks relief from "heat" of two-person relationship. "Two inmates of boarding house": must make the situation conventional to avoid intensity of phantasies concerning intimate relations.

B<sub>G</sub>

Retreat from emotional involvement in, or responsibility for, the results of her aggression. Avoidance of feeling is a defence against deep depressive phantasies of destruction.

C<sub>2</sub>

Retreat from heterosexual situation (cf. A<sub>2</sub> and B<sub>2</sub>). No identity given to the figures.

C<sub>1</sub>

Phantasy of deprivation with attempt at denial and cover-up. Minimal emotional involvement.

Blank

Deeply repressed phantasy of damage and aggression in parental intercourse—"climbing Alps—someone fell—right down in deep crevasse." Intense guilt at aggressive sexual wishes towards father? Denial of personal involvement—blockage of depressive feeling.

### *Dominant problems*

The phantasy material reveals deeply repressed depressive problems rooted in oral-aggressive conflicts. The need for primitive libidinal satisfaction is expressed in C<sub>3</sub>, where a certain degree of gratification is experienced, but the main part of her phantasy concerning the mother is of a depriving, aggressive person, probably representing at depth a bad aggressive breast. The

patient maintains a very precarious control over her sadistic wishes towards this figure. The aggression breaks through in B1.

Father-figures appear less frequently in the manifest content although her problems concerning relationships with men are no less evident. Her wishes for a close relationship with the father and her fear of the aggressive component of this relationship are shown by implication in her flat denial of these wishes (B3) and the aggressive phantasies (e.g. to the Blank). The degree of her Oedipal problem is indicated by her avoidance of these situations in all the three-person themes (A3, B3, C3). It might be hypothesized that the aggressive aspects of the genital-level components (as shown in the Blank) derive from the earlier oral incorporation of the aggressive mother (the "nattering" women in AG) as a means of control. This would relate to the obsessional control attempts suggested by story AG. Having internalized this aspect of the mother she then has to control the aggression within herself, and this unresolved problem is carried over into the later genital-level conflict situations.

Contrasted with the fear of her destructive wishes towards men is the wish for a passive submissive relationship with the powerful father (suggested by the passivity of her relationships in CG and A3). These contrasting attitudes are also detectable in the relationship she built up during the test situation. She made a semi-flirtatious relationship carrying with it a fair degree of aggression (cf. the final comment), yet also clearly seeing the situation as a threat, to which she had to submit (cf. her comments about the cognitive testing).

### *Defensive resources*

Her first line of defence is a rejection of any card that disturbs her. She attempts to escape from the situation. A similar mechanism is to put her phantasy at a distance, e.g. by putting the scene abroad, making it supernatural or symbolic, or distant in time, or simply "second-hand" (e.g. B1). Part of the same defensive system is the overt denial of emotional involvement, or of any situation that is intolerable for her (e.g. the "father and daughter" relationship in B3). Three-person family situations are all avoided in this way.



## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STORIES

These hysterical defences carry her along until a point is reached in the test where her violent destructive phantasies intrude. Her final defence at this juncture is to dissociate all affect and adopt the cynical, cold, matter-of-fact attitude that she expressed in her feelings about her work. In both AG and Blank the dissociation occurs quite suddenly, there being no transitional development between the attitudes of concern and don't-care in these stories. This abrupt and total splitting is an ominous feature. It suggests that her range of defences is weak and that under conditions of stress psychotic elements of her pathology might produce a severe disturbance that she has hitherto been able to avoid. Diagnostic impression is of a severe hysterical illness with depressive features.

### 6

*Female. Aged 16 years, 9 months*  
*Very Superior Ability (Wechsler Full Scale)<sup>1</sup>*

A persistent thief, paranoid, malicious, amoral, incapable of forming any bonds of affection except possibly with the father.

She was deserted by the mother at thirteen months and fostered with a series of relations; at the age of eleven she returned to the father, who was by then living with the mother's sister and their large family of younger children.

### *Behaviour during the test*

The test gave her considerable pleasure and gratification. She was at times carried away by excitement and was unable to respond to a suggestion that the stories need not all be so lengthy. The session occupied almost three hours and 10 interpretations were offered.

<sup>1</sup> This case study is taken from a research investigation by O'Kelly (1955a, 1955b) into the kind and quality of relations with people shown by delinquent adolescent girls. Here the O-R technique has been used in studying fifty delinquent girls, and their responses are compared with those of normal girls of the same age.

*Test Protocol*

A<sub>1</sub>

There is a man. He lost his daughter. She died during the war and was buried in the churchyard. The church was blitzed. There was just the ruins. He was away at the war at the time. When he came back there was just the ruins and the grave, all overgrown. So he stood by the grave and prayed.

A<sub>2</sub>

There was a man who had to go abroad. While he was abroad his wife went off with another man. When he came back she wouldn't have anything to do with him. He asked his mother what to do and she advised him to go to America to stay with some relations he was fond of. On the boat he got friendly with the steward's daughter. First he feared to tell her he was married. Later, standing by the rail, he couldn't keep it back and told her, fearing it was all over. But it wasn't. She was going to America too. They got married there and came back later.

C<sub>3</sub>

A Brother and sister went for a holiday with their grandmother at a little cottage in Penzance. A coastguard told them that the pirates had left some treasure and loot in a cave, but that they should not go there as it was dangerous and several people had lost their lives there. The children went out in a boat and entered a cave to shelter from the rain. There they found a bell and hidden inside it was a canvas bag with a metal ring. The boy could not pull it out as it was very heavy, so he asked his sister to help. They were disappointed to find only some large stones and no treasure. But at the bottom was a parchment telling them to put a key into the bottom of a crystal on their Granny's mantelpiece. The boy remembered that Granny was secretive about this and always hushed them when they asked about it. The coastguard then came to take them home. In the morning they oiled the rusty key, turned it in the crystal, which unscrewed from its stand causing the whole mantelpiece to open up. Inside was bags and bags of treasure. Now the Granny did not have to be thrown out by the landlord.



B<sub>3</sub>

Tony was very fond of Maria and she pretended she was fond of him and played up to him. But all the time she was going out with his brother. His brother was a bad sort, not a thief, but he had nasty ways and would do anything to get anyone into trouble. The only man who knew both men inside out was the priest and he said they would just have to prove which loved her most and was loyal to her. A month later Maria gave out that she was pregnant and that her father wouldn't look after her at all. The brother told her flat he would not marry her if he had to look after the baby, but Tony said that he would take the child as his own. They went to the priest to arrange the marriage and he smiled wisely at them. Then she cried and told Tony she was not pregnant at all but was just trying to find out who thought most of her.

A<sub>G</sub>

There was a rich man and a poor man living in the same area. They were disputing who would be the most popular with the other village folk. The rich man says naturally he would be the more popular because money means a lot. The poor man says, "Money doesn't mean everything, but we will try it and see." So they arrange to pretend that each has lost a daughter and stage mock funerals, so as to see who gets the most sympathy. The rich man thought, "If I can pay for a very expensive coffin with rich settings, people will think I must think a lot of my daughter to pay all that, so I'll get all the sympathy." The poor man didn't think anything like that; he just did the best he could. When the day came, the two funerals were announced solemnly in church. The poor man was there with his plain wooden coffin that all the people gathered round crying as they were really sorry. The rich man was left there with all his jewels and not anybody with him, he had been so snooty with them.

B<sub>1</sub>

One Christmas Eve Mary told her daddy that she would stay awake for Father Christmas. He told her that if she did this, Father Christmas would not come at all. When she went to bed she hung up a pillow case, because she always hung up a pillow

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case instead of a stocking. She stayed awake and at midnight heard someone come in, touch the end of her bed and go out again. She scrambled down to the foot of the bed and felt the pillow case, all nobbly with things. She felt very happy and got back into bed and went to sleep. In the morning she grabbed the pillow case and ran into her father's room to show him all her presents. She undid the neck of the pillow case and brought out a lot of brown paper parcels. But inside them were just pieces of coke and she looked at the coke and looked at her father and burst out crying. All through the day and right into the evening she kept thinking of these parcels and wishing she had stayed asleep. In the evening there was a party and the father led her and the guests in to the Christmas tree. After he had given all the other children their presents, she got hers from the bottom of the tree. Mary wasn't going to risk it after that and every Christmas made certain that she was asleep.

Cg

A young actor came to England from America. The English people did not like his films and were determined to show it. They heard he was going to be presented to the Mayor at the Town Hall, and armed themselves with potatoes and bad eggs. At last the leader of the mob said, "He's coming", so just as the door opened they all started throwing things. Unfortunately the mayor came out first. So there he was, his face as purple as his robe, with a mixture of egg and tomato on it. When they saw him, they just stood there and gaped.

A3

The Queen was coming to lay the foundation stone of a new Mission Hall. One of the boys from the local scouts had been chosen as the guard for the King and Queen as they walked through the town. He was very proud and the next morning went to school prepared to boast that he was the only one to have had the honour. But they all started laughing at him and one of the younger boys said, "What does it feel like to escort my mother and father through the town?" The unfortunate boy had chosen the wrong couple.



B<sub>2</sub>

Mr. and Mrs. Jones and their son had been to tea with some relatives. When they got back they could not find their key to get in. So they sent their son to borrow the next-door neighbour's key, as it was the same as their own. While he was gone, it started pouring with rain. About a half-hour later, he decided to come back. He had been playing with the neighbour's son and had forgotten all about it. So Mr. Jones went for the key himself, but found it was unnecessary as he had left the door open.

B<sub>G</sub>

The boys at the village school always made David White take the dirty part in their games. For instance, if they were playing cowboys and Indians, he always had to be the one to be killed before the game had hardly started. One day he was made the guard and stood in one archway, while they stood in another. The leader made a plan that they would fill their water-pistols with ink and go round the back and shower him from head to foot. However, David got tired of waiting and went to the sweet shop. In the meantime an elderly red-faced gentleman stood under the empty arch to wait for a bus. He was not altogether pleased when he turned round and saw that the back of his mac and trousers were covered with an assortment of red and blue ink.

C<sub>2</sub>

A very rich lady, who was used to living in splendid surroundings, decided she would spend her holidays down in Kent. She saw an advertisement of a hotel in Dover, with running water in every room and a heavenly view from the window. When she arrived she was shown her room which had in it an old broken picture and battered furniture. She complained to the landlady and asked where the running water was. The landlady showed her the streams of water running through the holes in the ceiling. The rich lady took this with a pinch of salt and asked for the heavenly view. "Well," said the landlady, "there's a skylight, ain't there?" The visitor decided not to spend her holiday in Kent after all.

C1

A boy was very careless in his ways. He would leave dirty stains on the table cloth and towels hanging over the backs of chairs. He always left the tap dripping and never remembered to change the flower water. The mother kept on at him and at last decided to fine him a penny for every wrong thing he did. As he did at least twelve things wrong every day and got only 6d. a week pocket money, he was very much in debt by the end of the month. Soon he lost his careless ways even if it was only through sheer force, and now he even picks his cap off the floor.

Blank

Tom was very fond of a cow called Cherry. who did not give much milk, so that his father said he would have to be slaughtered. That night Tom ran away with Cherry. Next morning, when they came to a park, he borrowed some paint and set up a sign, "Milk, 1d. per mug. Please bring your own mugs." All the children asked their nurses to get some and they were very popular. Then the slaughterer, to whom Tom's father had sold the cow, spotted them and chased them with the police. Does it matter if it is a bit far-fetched? The King took them into his palace and made Tom his chief dairy man.

### *Comment on the Performance*

The dominant theme is trickery, which occurs in one form or another in most of the stories, and which reflects a general pattern of her social behaviour. In spite of her high intelligence no awareness was shown that other people might regard trickery as in any way reprehensible; in B<sub>3</sub> and AG it is approved by the priest. The elaboration of tortuous deceptions seemed to give her a peculiar gratification. It is hoped to elucidate some of the functions of trickery in her various types of relationship.

*Father-daughter relations* are imagined in the first five shaded pictures A<sub>1</sub>, A<sub>2</sub>, B<sub>3</sub>, AG, B<sub>1</sub>.

In A<sub>1</sub> alone there is no trickery, but much depression expressed in her identification with the dead girl. The depression is felt in terms of her desertion by the father and there is a need to punish



him with remorse. But essentially the mourning situation is inverted here, since it is she who mourns the father, and therefore identifies with him. By introducing the death phantasy and transferring it from her father on to herself, she expresses at once her hatred, her guilt, and her grief.

A<sub>2</sub> carries on the same theme, namely that of the man who went away and came back to find he had lost the woman. But in this story, the ambivalence of the woman emerges; in so far as she is the wife, she is openly unfaithful and rejecting; in so far as she is the mother, she consoles her son, albeit by advising him to seek affection elsewhere. Finally the good girl emerges with some anxiety and the introduction of the theme that affection can only be gained by trickery. It is briefly noted that the good girl is the daughter of the steward, who is presumably a good father, whose job is to look after people.

In B<sub>3</sub> the subject is clearly identified with the girl. The lover is split into a good figure, shown in the picture, and a bad figure, who is "invented." Since the separate figure behind the door is normally seen as antipathetic and spying, it seems likely that the bad lover is confounded with the idealized father (in the form of the benign priest); and this type of splitting implies much repression. The expectancy that love can only be gained and tested through trickery is given in somewhat bizarre form, and the improbability of the story suggests that it is produced under much tension.

A<sub>G</sub> represents and elaborates the theme of father mourning daughter and the father is split into two figures, a good and a bad. Once more trickery is used to gain and test affection, but in this case it serves as a defence against depression, since the death was a fake. The rich father is punished for his hypocrisy, while the poor father is successful in his trick. The rich bejewelled coffin may represent a partial emergence of the girl's mother, a figure who has been completely repressed so far.

B<sub>1</sub> expresses at a fairly superficial level her feeling of having been tricked and cruelly disillusioned by the father and her jealousy of his young children. The conscious attitude is that the father was right and she is allowed a limited gratification in the end.



Throughout this series of five consecutive stories dealing with father-daughter relations, no mother-daughter relation is introduced, nor is there any reference to combined parents acting together. The continuous preoccupation with her father and the conspicuous absence of her mother suggests that an attempt is being made to use the father as a combined parent figure. The woman who is lost in the first four stories is therefore both herself and her mother, with whom she is identified at a deeply repressed level. The trickery in each case concerns the father's dubious gifts, the love affair, the unwanted baby, the bejewelled coffin, the lumps of coke. One meaning of the disillusion may be that the father is unable to take over the role of both parents and to supply her, at a deeper level, with a basis for a good femininity.

*Parent-son relations* are imagined in the two other shaded pictures A<sub>3</sub>, B<sub>2</sub>. She is now identifying herself clearly with the young boy, and on this condition the combined parents can make their appearance. In A<sub>3</sub> the parents are split into the idealized royal couple and the nondescript couple who are not even her own parents. In this story she expresses her cruel disillusionment and her sense of having been tricked by both parents. The jeering younger boy expresses her jealousy and humiliation in the present family situation. In the following story, B<sub>2</sub>, the situation is inverted and the boy punishes his parents by shutting them out in the pouring rain. In neither of these arrangements is conscious trickery recognized, but the punishment is effected by an improbable mistake, which again indicates a high degree of tension.

Primitive aggressive phantasies are expressed in response to all the coloured pictures and also to the shaded picture B<sub>6</sub>, into which colour is projected. These stories were lengthy and detailed, and they were related with a gratification amounting to positive glee.

Stories like the present response to C<sub>3</sub>, telling of treasure in underground caves and passages, or in secret boxes, have been found commonly in very disturbed adolescent girls and seem to express primitive phantasies of plundering the mother's body. In this case the subject is identified mainly with the boy, though he needs to be helped by his sister. The attitude of the grandmother



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is ambivalent, since she forbids them to seek, yet gains a rich reward, and is saved from eviction, when they succeed. A helpful father figure is also introduced and the general tone of the story is optimistic.

CG repeats the trickery-by-mistake theme. The subject, who is in fact extremely unpopular in her group, is again identified with the young man and in this role is able to displace the hostility of the group from herself on to her father. At the same time she identifies herself with the group, and, from this vantage point, gloats upon the discomfiture of the father. The primitive use of bad food appears to symbolize an identification with the repressed bad mother in her attack on the father.

BG repeats the same theme in some detail and this emphasizes its importance to her. The father is again punished instead of the son and by means of dirty fluids.

In C2 the mother-daughter relation emerges openly for the only time. As the lady visitor, she is tricked by being offered a room with broken furniture and is again attacked by fluid, in the form of rain pouring through the holes in the ceiling. The subject regarded this cynical deception as an excellent joke, and is thus also identified with the bad mother who delights to trick her daughter.

C1 describes at a relatively light-hearted level an attack of a boy upon his mother by means of dirty habits. There is again a reference to fluids—the dripping tap, the unchanged flower water. In terms of money, she states that he is not given enough with which to make amends and that he must necessarily get into a worse and worse position. He can, however, be reformed by sheer force, a form of treatment which has, in fact, been found effective with her.

*Blank.* In this situation she is still identified with the boy. A much improved mother figure appears in the form of the poor old cow, inadequate but benign, whom he loves and rescues from the father by trickery and theft. The father figure is again split into the three punitive figures and the idealized King, who is, however, a bit far-fetched. It was noted that the cow was referred to throughout as "he", presumably as a further restriction of her role as a mother.



*Conclusions*

(1) Father-daughter relations are imagined in the first five shaded pictures. Father figures are highly ambivalent and the stories are characterized by trickery in relation to his dubious gifts, by depression and by loss of the woman. In these stories, the mother-daughter relation is suppressed, but there may be references to her body in the false pregnancy (B<sub>3</sub>) and, from a primitive sadistic level, in the rich bejewelled coffin (AG) and the pillow case filled with coke parcels (B<sub>1</sub>). On this interpretation, the father's trickery is blamed for her lack of a good internal mother. At the same time idealized fathers occur in B<sub>3</sub> and B<sub>1</sub> and there is throughout a belief that men can love women, so that heterosexual relations need not be desperately bad.

(2) The combined parents appear only in A<sub>3</sub> and B<sub>2</sub>. Hostility to them is expressed, under considerable tension, which can only be tolerated on condition that she takes a male role. At an unconscious level she seems to identify herself with the two buildings; the new Town Hall, of which the Queen should lay the foundation stone, and the empty house to which the father has lost the key. In these stories she expresses her deep feeling that both parents have failed her. The need to punish them (they are not really exalted, they are shut out in the rain) is given more manifest emphasis than the need to welcome them (the boy was chosen as escort; the house was open all the time).

(3) Primitive aggressive phantasies of wetting, soiling and breaking in are given in response to the coloured pictures, and their expression gives her much pleasurable excitement. These attacks are imagined in the father-son, mother-daughter and mother-son relationships; that is, in every type of relationship she describes except that of the girl to her father or lover. The strained mistakes in the all-male stories BG and CG suggests that the repressed mother is represented by the bad eggs and dirty fluids which are used to attack the father and also by herself as the boy who escapes while his punishment is deflected on to the father.

(4) Mother-son relations are discussed in the last two stories and are relatively good. In C<sub>1</sub> he is able to take the mother's punishment and to be reformed by sheer force. In the blank card she



## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE STORIES

sees the boy rescuing his devalued and partially denied mother from the paternal wrath.

The general conclusion is that the mother-figure is deeply repressed and almost wholly bad, whereas the father-figure is ambivalent. In so far as the good father is maintained, heterosexual relations are relatively good and the compulsive trickery seems to be mainly associated with the repression of the bad mother.

## Chapter Four

### NORMATIVE DATA

**I**N assessing the extent to which, and the ways in which, unconscious and more conscious processes determine the individual's perception of external reality, the clinical psychologist keeps in mind standards of perception, and treatment of particular stimulus situations, which he has derived from experience of responses by "normal" individuals of like background and ability. He may also use as a "norm" groups of individuals who manifest particular patterns of behaviour in specific circumstances, relating these patterns of behaviour to recognizable kinds and degrees of adjustment or maladjustment.

The value of more precise normative information, based on the analysis of the responses of homogeneous groups of people selected according to definite criteria, is obvious. But the provision of information of this kind, which is sufficiently detailed and apposite for very detailed clinical analysis of responses, poses a number of problems. In the first place, there is the difficulty of establishing criteria according to which the groups of individuals to be used in the normative study may be selected. For example, among such groups it would be important to include a "normal" population. If one selects such a group using as criteria a definition of "clinically healthy" the sample is likely to be composed of people who have not sought clinical help and show no overt symptoms of maladjustment. On the basis of such negative criteria we are likely to include in our sample a large number of people who are in varying degrees functioning below their maximal efficiency as individuals. If, on the other hand, we try to seek a population of individuals who are effective, well-adjusted



people, there is still the difficulty of deciding criteria as well as the difficulty of establishing that the individuals in the population meet its requirements.

A further set of problems arises particularly in the case of projection tests such as Rorschach and the Object Relations Technique, where the stimuli are relatively unstructured and ambiguous, and permit of a very wide range of response. The least amongst these difficulties is the necessity for a very large population in order to provide comparable information about the more unusual ways of dealing with particular features of the stimuli. A related but more fundamental difficulty, inextricably linked to problems of rationale and personality theory, concerns the question of what features of the stimulus situation should be covered in the normative survey, and how, and in what terms, should the characteristics of behaviour in respect of them be classified. The answer to this question depends largely upon the extent to which the theory of personality used in interpreting the subjects' responses can be given operational definition.

A third set of problems relates to the importance of the situation in which the test is given as a determining factor in characterizing responses. If, as is maintained in the previous theoretical discussion (page 14), the subjects' ability to reveal characteristics of unconscious dynamics depends very much upon the motivational sets inherent in the test situation, then it is clearly desirable to seek normative data from groups of people tested under similar or comparable motivational conditions. For example, this might limit the usefulness of normative data collected from subjects who are participating in a research project on request, by the side of another group consisting of patients seeking help in a hospital or clinic.

It has not yet become possible to meet these theoretical and practical requirements in obtaining normative data for this Object Relations Technique. The information available for present publication comes from two quite separate explorations with the test, the one in a clinical setting and the other in a research project. These samples of data have been obtained from the analysis of stories produced by

- (a) 50 patients of above average intelligence attending an out-patient psychiatric clinic



## AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

- (b) 40 adolescent girls, aged 14-19, attending secondary modern or technical schools.

### A. AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE: 50 PATIENTS

The normative information available from the use of the technique in a clinical setting is at present inadequate by reason of the somewhat selected sample of patients generally seen in the out-patient clinic where the test has been developed. Nevertheless it is thought that some data based on this experience with the technique, restricted though it is, should be presented pending more detailed and more representative studies when the test material is generally available. Such information will probably be of help to psychologists using the technique, in that it will give some guidance on what are the more common perceptions and interpretations of the stimuli, and it will illustrate also the very wide range of responses given to these pictures.

These normative data are taken from the six hundred stories given by fifty patients attending an out-patient psychiatric clinic. The thirty-two men and eighteen women in the sample were given the test as a part of the diagnostic procedure. None of the patients was too ill to continue employment. Thirty-nine of the forty patients were between twenty and thirty years of age, forty-five were of superior or very superior ability (I.Q. 120 or above) as assessed by the Wechsler Bellevue Scale.

The data collected relates to the three main variables used in the picture.

1. *The Human Content*: the one-person, two-person, three-person and group situations presented in each of the series, A, B and C.

(a) Information is obtained on how the subjects *characterize* these situations; the number of persons they actually see and use from the picture; whether they are seen as male or female, child or adult, and where they are seen. Frequently other characters are introduced into the story in addition to those actually seen in the picture. A note on the frequency of such introductions is given in the text.



(b) In addition an attempt has been made to classify the *manifest relations* these characters have with one another in the stories.

2. *The Reality Content*: the content of the pictures, excluding the human figures, which may be taken to represent objects of the external world. The amount of reality content and the clarity of its definition is varied in the three series A, B and C.

(a) Data on this variable relate first to the *setting ascribed* by the subject, i.e. how the overall perception of the reality content is interpreted to make a setting for the dramatic action of the story.

(b) Secondly, information is obtained on the subject's *use and interpretation of the detail* of the reality content. All subjects do not make use of the detail, particularly in the A series of pictures. Information on the number of subjects who do not mention any details in stories in response to A series pictures, and data on the number of details used by individual subjects in responses to B and C series pictures are given in the text where the information is likely to be of value.

3. *The Reality Context*: the medium in which the pictures are drawn, i.e. the light charcoal shading of the A series, the black charcoal of the B series, and the colour introduced into C series. As described previously (page 22), this variable is intended to add something to the emotional climate of the total situation portrayed.

The data collected under this heading include only those references in the stories where the use of the shading, darkness or colour is clearly stated or implied. The data do not represent, therefore, the full influence of this variable. Such information could only be obtained through a careful inquiry into the impact and use of the reality context in each story. In the present study this was not attempted.

Information as to the number of subjects who do or do not give evidence of using the reality context is given in the text.

The sample of responses analysed is too small for any firm conclusions to be based upon the data they provide. Brief comment only is given, relating the data to the writer's clinical experience with the technique.

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

## Picture A1. (Presentation 1)

### 1. THE HUMAN CONTENT

#### (a) *Characterization* (Persons seen in the picture)

One person	20		
		1 man	17
		1 adult	2
		1 woman	1
Two persons	19		
		1 man and 1 woman	10
		2 men	5
		1 man and 1 ghost	2
		2 adults	1
		1 man and 1 child	1
Three or more persons	11		
		1 man and vague group	6
		1 man, 1 woman and 1 child	2
		1 man and 3 women	1
		1 man and 2 women	1
		2 men and 1 adult	1

—

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—

#### (b) *Manifest Relations*

alone	12
heterosexual	9
supernatural	9
dramatic	5
friendship	4
casual meeting	2
paternal	2
pedagogical	1
work	1
not clearly specified	5

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—



# NORMATIVE DATA

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

### (a) *The physical setting ascribed*

A church (in or near)	12
Other buildings (in or near)	8

domestic	2
shop window	1
theatre	1
smithy	1
library	1
graveyard	1
building	1

Features of nature 16

waterfall	3
riverbank	2
seaside	2
fountain	1
swamp	1
desert	1
cave in forest	1
bushes and trees	1
mountains	1
others unspecified	3

Hades	3
Others specified (battlefield)	1
Not specified	10

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### (b) *Interpretation of main details*

#### (i) *The "Arch"*

church door	6
cathedral arches	4
cave	3
stained glass windows	2
corridors or arches	2
gateway	2
shelter	1
trees	2
waterfall	3
not mentioned	25

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# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

(ii) *Darker area, lower left (rare)*

a fire	I
smithy's furnace	I
church font	I

(these are in addition to the use of this area as a human figure)

## 3. REALITY CONTEXT: USE OF THE LIGHT SHADING

(specific references)

Diffuse—descriptive	16	fading light	4
		dawn effects	4
		fog or smoke	3
		darkness	2
		cloud effect	2
		foam	1
More objectified	14	moving water	5
		fire	3
		specific light effects	3
		sparkling water	1
		ghostly shapes	1
		nakedness	1
Symbolic	12	destruction or war	2
		dreamlike	5
		gloom or mystery	1
		despair	1
		thoughts	1
		religious atmosphere	1
		"the light"=goal	1
Total references	41	(made by 78 percent of the subjects)	



Although this picture was intended as a one-person situation, and the central figure was intended to be ambiguous as to sex, experience shows that it is equally common to use it as a two-person situation, and that the figure in the centre of the picture is most usually seen as a male. The second figure is usually seen on the left of the central figure. It is seen in the somewhat darker shaded area in the bottom left-hand corner of the picture. In one or two instances the lighter area within this dark shape is seen as a baby held by a woman. Where three or more persons are seen in the picture they are usually ascribed to the patches of shading both to the right and to the left of the central figure. A careful inquiry into the quality of the percept provides valuable information.

Other persons introduced into the stories number only 8 in this sample of 50 responses.

Since this picture is the first presentation, it is thought that the range of possibilities it offers for characterization affords some advantages in permitting more freedom for the subject to superimpose upon it his dominant tension system with some degree of clarity (see page 27). Analysis of the latent content suggests that this picture tends to evoke conflicts between early dependent and aggressive relations with phantasy objects. How much this is related to the picture content and context, and how much dependent upon the fact that it is a first presentation, is not yet certain.

There is some evidence from clinical experience with the technique to support the hypothesis that where subjects see more than two, and in particular more than three persons in the situation, there is paranoid projection in the relationships portrayed.

As in the case of subsequent pictures, the classification of manifest relations here attempted does not fully illustrate the wide range of object relation situations which may be superimposed on these stimuli.

The picture permits of a very wide interpretation in the subject's choice of setting for the dramatic action of the story. Most common is the interpretation of the centre detail, the "archway" effect, as something to do with a church or like building. Features of nature, often given as an alternative interpretation for the centre detail, are fairly common ways of expressing early ambivalence and resultant insecurities. The use of the reality context

as sampled in the following table may be related to Rorschach determinants in characterizing these early anxieties and the methods of dealing with them.

Some subjects make more than one reference to their use of the reality context, or use it in more than one way. Where this is so, the additional references are included in the above data. In the fifty stories given in response to this picture there are references to the use of the shading in thirty-nine, i.e. in about 80 percent of the stories. There is considerably more use made of the shading in responses to this picture than to the three other pictures in the series, A<sub>2</sub>, A<sub>3</sub>, A<sub>6</sub>, where its use is mentioned in approximately 65 percent, 40 percent and 50 percent of the stories to the respective pictures.

The use of soft light shading in this series was intended to stimulate and intensify phantasies concerning gratification of early dependent needs. Anxieties about aggressive object relationships which are phantasied as a result of frustration of these needs are often reflected in the subject's use of the shading effects in the pictures. For example, the more general free floating anxiety is probably reflected in the diffuse-descriptive use of shading, while intellectual defences against anxiety are typified in the more objectified and symbolic usages.

*Picture A<sub>2</sub>. (Presentation 2)*

I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

(a) *Characterization* (Persons seen in the picture)

Two persons	49	
		1 man and 1 woman 38
		2 women 8
		2 men 1
		2 adults 1
		1 boy and 1 girl 1

Three persons	1	
		1 man and 1 woman with 1 adult in distance

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# NORMATIVE DATA

## (b) *Manifest Relations*

heterosexual	27
friendship	6
maternal	3
paternal	2
supernatural	2
casual	2
sibling	1
conspiratorial	1
medical	1
not specified	5
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## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

### (a) *The physical setting ascribed*

Interior	14		
		domestic	5
		theatre	3
		hostelry balcony	2
		ancestral home	1
		doctor's surgery	1
		cave or tunnel	2
Features of Nature	22		
		seaside	12
		near river or lake	4
		forest or park	3
		countryside unspecified	2
		hills	1
Others	5		
		near a church	1
		gate of heaven	1
		nudist colony	1
		street	1
		dark place	1
Not specified	9		
	<hr/>		
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# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

## (b) Interpretation of main details

Centre area between the heads of the two figures:

seascape or lake vista	14
abstract: goal—"the light"	5
theatre stage	3
window (curtained)	5
view from hill	3
forest or tunnel opening	2
sky or cloud	2
gate of heaven	1
water with island	1
not mentioned	16
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## 3. REALITY CONTEXT: USE OF LIGHT SHADING

(specific references)

Diffuse-descriptive	11		
		sunrise or dawn	6
		moonlight	2
		sunlight	1
		fog or mist	1
		shadows	1
More objectified	20		
		water, e.g. sea, lake	15
		nudity	2
		stage light	1
		curtains	1
		X-ray effect	1
Symbolic	11		
		future or a goal	5
		good and evil	3
		sadness	2
		warmth	1
	—		
Total references	42	(made by 64 percent of the subjects)	
		161	



This picture is almost always seen as a two-person situation, and most frequently the figures are seen as man and woman. It is fairly common for other characters to be introduced into the stories (there are twelve such introductions in the fifty stories analysed).

The quality of the object relations shown in response to this direct heterosexual challenge, e.g. the degree of individuality given to each person, the amount of interaction, and the outcome should be evaluated in relation to the dominant tension revealed in response to the previous picture. The story for A<sub>1</sub> will give indications of the extent to which tensions arising from the frustration of early dependent needs may impair subsequent heterosexual relations. The story for A<sub>2</sub> may provide confirmatory information, as well as indications of the way in which the subject can deal with the heterosexual relationship.

There is again a wide range of interpretation possible for this picture in respect of setting. It is presented in sequence after A<sub>1</sub>, and it is important to note whether a change of setting is ascribed, and in what direction, as evidence of the method of dealing with the tension system brought forward from A<sub>1</sub>. The use of the reality context may provide additional information on this point.

Although the reality context in this picture permits of many usages, the more sinister connotations, seen for example in some responses to A<sub>1</sub>, are given more rarely. The heterosexual relationship is presented too definitely for such aggressive wishes and consequent threats to be expressed. Techniques of denial, evasion, and intellectualization are used often as defensive methods.

Sixty-four percent of subjects in this sample make clear references in their stories to the use of the light shading.

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

Picture A<sub>3</sub>. (Presentation 8)

## I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

(a) *Characterization* (Persons seen in the picture)

Three persons

50

3 men	18
2 men and 1 woman	7
3 adults	5
3 statues or ghosts	4
2 women and 1 man	4
1 man and 1 woman and 1 child	3
1 or 2 men with statue(s) or ghost(s)	3
Other combinations	6
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(b) *Manifest Relations*

Social: various	7
family	7
heterosexual	5
military	6
casual meeting	6
conspiratorial	4
competitive (duel 2)	4
supernatural	4
work	2
medical	1
not clearly specified	4
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	50
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# NORMATIVE DATA

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

### (a) *Physical setting ascribed*

Interior	6	domestic	3
		hospital	1
		hostelry	1
		officers' mess	1
Features of Nature	28		
		countryside unspecified	13
		park or house grounds	8
		waste land	2
		woods	1
		riverside	1
		island	1
		snowstorm	1
		garden	1
Hades or Heaven	2		
Others specified	5		
		graveyard	2
		street	2
		battlefield	1
Not specified	9		
	—		
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	—		

### (b) *Interpretation of main details*

*Extended patch of light diagonally across the picture:*

A stream	5
A street	3
A gulf	3

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

## 3. REALITY CONTEXT: USE OF THE LIGHT SHADING (specific references)

Diffuse-descriptive	11	fog or mist	4
		shadows or light	3
		sunrise or sunset	3
		night	1
More objectified	6	water, stream	3
		snow or rain	2
		muddy land	1
Symbolic	15	separation	3
		lack of life	3
		desolation	2
		ghostliness	3
		dream world	1
		light=a goal	1
		indecision	1
		gloom	1
Total references	32	(made by 38 percent of the subjects)	

The use of the three figures is general in responses to this picture. The individual characterization of them varies considerably. From the small sample the evidence is inconclusive, but it appears that a group of three males is used almost as frequently as a mixed group. The use of ghosts or statues is more frequent than in response to any other picture in the series, which points to the difficulty of the three-person situation as the main reason, for the picture in itself is not less definite than AG.

The use of the centre figure as a woman is unusual in this sample: it occurs twice only.

In eight cases persons other than those actually seen in the picture were introduced into the story.

Presented after CG, the strongest of the colour series, which faces the subject with the challenge of dealing with authority in a highly charged emotional situation, A<sub>3</sub> is a difficult picture for many subjects. Where the first response is very brief or evasive it is often worth while to ask for an alternative story.



A common underlying theme is competition and Oedipal rivalry. It is interesting to note that where the test is given in a situation which is perceived by the subject to be one of stern rivalry, the competitive theme is represented more directly and nearer the surface. For example it has been noted that whereas the description of a duel occurs rarely in the clinical sample used in this study, it is given very frequently when the test is used in competitive vocational selection work.

Detail in the specification of the physical setting is less frequent in responses to this picture. The reality content provides fewer clues and the object relations situation itself adds to the challenge of a stimulus which gives few securities and much in the way of threats. The subject's method of dealing with this situation may be revealed in the use of the reality context, as well as in the object relations situation as it is developed.

The physical setting ascribed, with such details as may be added, often typifies the subject's unconscious view of the Oedipal battleground.

The sample of responses analysed is too small to allow any conclusions to be drawn as to the differences in the use of the reality context in the three pictures so far considered. With A<sub>3</sub> the presentation as a whole is more indefinite than A<sub>1</sub> or A<sub>2</sub>, which may result in the subjects' difficulty in making use of the shading as a part of their defensive efforts. There is something of the same trend towards more sinister and gloomy references as is found in responses to A<sub>1</sub>.

While the object relations situation presented represents the basic stimulus dynamics, the use of the reality content and context throws light on the nature and intensity of anxieties, and on the methods of defence against them. This picture is a particularly difficult stimulus situation because it is a three-person situation and because there is no reality content, and little opportunity to make a differentiated use of the shading.

Only 38 percent of the subjects made a reference in their stories to the use of the light shading; those subjects who show its use tend to make more than one reference or to use it in more than one way.

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

Picture AG. (Presentation 5)

## I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

(a) *Characterization* (Persons seen in the picture)

Two groups of people 30

3 adults + 3 adults	17
3 adults + other group	5
2 groups of men, women and children	2
3 adults + 3 spirits	2
3 men + 3 women + 2 bodies	1
2 men and 1 woman and adult group	1
3 adults and 1 man + group	1
1 man and group + 2 women	1

One group of adults	7
One group + one figure	5
Three people specified	5
Ghosts or symbolic shapes	2
One person only	1

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(b) *Manifest Relations*

tragic (accident, death)	10
social	8
casual meetings	6
work and business	5
supernatural	5
family	3
criminal or conspiratorial	3
military	2
dramatic	2
pedagogical	2
not specified	4

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# NORMATIVE DATA

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

### (a) *Physical setting ascribed*

Interior	11		
		theatre	3
		temple	2
		hostelry	2
		hospital	2
		others	2
Features of Nature	11		
		countryside, not detailed	4
		countryside, detailed (cliffs, island, hills, fields, 'park, garden, forest)	7
Graveyard	8		
Others specified	13		
		city street	5
		docks	3
		mine	2
		prison gate	1
		moors	1
		battlefield	1
Abstract	2		
Not specified	5		
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### (b) *Interpretation of main details*

(i) *The patches of light and shade going diagonally across the picture in the lower half:*

steps	4
graves or coffins	4
seals or fish	3
embankment	2
figures on ground	2
theatre seats	1
hill steps	1
masonry	1
tree shadows	1
river	1
not mentioned	1
	<hr/>
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	50
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# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

- (ii) *The horizontal small areas of shading in the top and middle of the picture (rare)*

tree	1
illuminated cross	1
bomb falling	1

## 3. REALITY CONTEXT: USE OF THE LIGHT SHADING (specific references)

Diffuse-descriptive	11		
		fog or mist	4
		light effect	3
		darkness	1
		cloud effect	1
		sunshine	1
		dawn lights	1
Objectified	2		
		a fire	2
Symbolic	12		
		tragedy, grief, gloom	7
		dreamlike	2
		ghostliness	2
		coldness	1
Total references	25	(made by 50 percent of the subjects)	

Thirty out of fifty in this sample see two groups; at least forty-two see it as a group situation. The characterization of the group varies very considerably, as does the extent to which the characters are given individuality. In six instances only are persons other than those actually seen in the picture introduced into the story.

The manifest social relations, as well as the physical setting ascribed and the use of detail, tend to support the hypothesis derived from clinical experience that this picture evokes stories concerned with depressive phantasied object relations. It is useful to examine these object relations with reference to the previous story in response to B3.



# NORMATIVE DATA

As with all responses to these vague stimuli the physical setting ascribed is congruous with the object relation situation superimposed upon the picture. A classification which took into account the many elaborations given would reveal more fully the depressive features usually represented in the situation.

This picture provides considerable opportunity for such elaboration in the use of differentiated shaded areas. Aspects of the underlying object relations problem dealt with in the stories are often "put out" upon these details.

There are considerably fewer specific references indicating the use of the light shading in this picture than in the three previous pictures of A series. On the other hand there is much greater possibility than in A<sub>3</sub> for the use of differentiated shaded areas as details of objective reality. It is possible that this opportunity provided in the stimulus meets the defensive need to seek out objective reality in response to a total situation which is regarded as depressive.

Fifty percent of the subjects made a clear reference to the use of the reality context.

## Picture B<sub>1</sub>. (Presentation 6)

### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

#### (a) *Characterization* (Persons seen in the picture)

One person	33	1 man	29
		1 woman	2
		1 adult	1
		1 boy	1
Two persons	17	1 man and 1 woman	13
		1 man and 1 child	2
		1 woman and 1 child	2

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—

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

## (b) *Manifest Relations*

alone	22
heterosexual	14
paternal	4
criminal	3
family	2
friendship	1
sibling	1
medical	1
pedagogical	1
casual	1
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	50
	—

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

### (a) *The physical setting ascribed*

Domestic	16		
		bedroom	12
		child's bedroom	4
Bachelor's room	19		
Woman's room	6		
Hostelry bedroom	8		
School dormitory	1		
	—		
	50		
	—		

### (b) *Interpretation of, and attention to details*

12 subjects use 3-5 details	
29 subjects use 1-2 details	
9 subjects use no detail	
bed	21
clothes on bed	16
door, open	11
stairs	10
landing light	9
furniture	7
mirror	5
chest or dressing table	4
banisters	2
bedrails	2
others specified	4



# NORMATIVE DATA

## REALITY CONTEXT: THE USE MADE OF THE DARKNESS AND SHADING (specific references)

Diffuse-descriptive	10	darkness and night	9
		silver half-light	1
More objectified	4		
		specific light effects	4
Symbolic	23	poverty and bareness	9
		sinister forces	5
		softness and warmth	2
		gloom	2
		coldness	2
		protection	1
		forgiveness	1
		sordidness	1

Total references                      37 (made by 50 percent of the subjects)

This picture is seen as a one-person situation more frequently than as a two-person situation. In this sample insufficient evidence was collected to decide whether the second person (usually in the bed) was actually seen there or introduced. There were only three spontaneous references making clear that the shape of a figure was made out in the bed.

In addition to people actually seen or put into the immediate stimulus situations, it is common for other people to be introduced into the story. There were twenty-two such introductions in this sample of stories.

On the surface the commoner themes have to do with loneliness and the need for warm dependent relations, and with individual striving in a world which offers little of comfort and reward. The stories often provide evidence of the subject's methods of dealing with these frustrations.

For some subjects the more definite reality content is often a relief after the indefinite and depressive stimulus situation of AG, for others it appears to present a threat.

The physical setting is generally seen as a bedroom. Specification and elaborations follow the needs of the object relations

## AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

situation "put out" upon the picture. Aspects of these object relations are reflected in the attention to and use of the detail of the reality content.

The reality content is definite and uncompromising. Attention to bed and/or the clothes on the bed is fairly general, suggesting that this part of the reality content is a most important focus of attention, and intrinsically related to the phantasies evoked by the picture. Attention to other details may reflect attempts to evade expression of such phantasies, or it may reflect object relations which are feared as a possible consequence of these phantasies being expressed in reality.

The dark shading by the side of the uncompromising reality content was intended to stimulate anxieties resulting from the frustrations of a reality which must be faced but which offers threats rather than supports. The subject's use of the reality content often reflects something of the nature of these anxieties as well as his methods of dealing with them.

It should be noted that the nine references to poverty and bareness represent only those where there is evidence of the darkness and shading contributing to that impression. The reality content also adds to this atmosphere in the picture, which, with related feelings of coldness and lack of comfort, is a common response to this picture.

Fifty percent of subjects made a clear reference to the use of the reality context.

### *Picture B2. (Presentation 9)*

#### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

##### *(a) Characterization (Persons seen in the picture)*

Two persons	50		
		1 man and 1 woman	49
		2 men	1
			—
			50
			—



# NORMATIVE DATA

## (b) *Manifest Relations*

heterosexual	45
friendship	5
criminal or conspiratorial	4
work	1
	—
	50
	—

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

### (a) *The physical setting ascribed*

Near a house	29	
		outside a house 13
		garden or house grounds 10
		outside flats 3
		outside an institution 2
		outside a country house 1
Street	11	
Under a tree	7	
Public park	1	
Not specified	2	
	—	
	50	
	—	

### (b) *Interpretation of, and attention to detail*

tree	32
house or other domicile	29
windows	6
lights in building	4
gardens	5
doorway	3
lawns	2
foliage	2
bush	1
curtains	1
<i>Unusual perceptions</i>	
profile in tree	2
animal shape in tree	1
animal shape in bush	1
old woman in bush	1

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

## 3. REALITY CONTEXT: THE USE MADE OF DARKNESS AND SHADING (specific references)

Diffuse-descriptive	26	night or evening	15
		moonlight	10
		smoke	1
More objectified	12	rain	3
		lights specified	3
		smooth lawn	2
		foliage	2
		sinister shapes	2
Symbolic	6	gloom or misery	3
		sinister forces	2
		tragedy	1
Total references	44	(made by 60 percent of the subjects)	

Two people are generally seen in this picture, usually a man and a woman. Other persons (for the most part parents, siblings or children) are introduced into the story by approximately 50 percent of the subjects.

Heterosexual relations are very frequently the main subject of the story. The house is often used to represent a third "object", in various ways prohibiting, threatening, or, more rarely, facilitating the heterosexual relationship. Aspects of the object relationships projected on to this picture are sometimes put upon the reality content, in particular on to the large black shadow of the tree on the right, the smaller shadow on the left and the windows of the house.

It is usual to make reference to the house and to use it as a part of the story; what part it is given in the story varies considerably. The tree on the right is used equally often, representing a shelter or less frequently a sinister threat in the situation. Attention to the windows and lights in the building is also linked in the stories with the possibility of shelter and warmth, or alternatively with agents critical of or hostile to heterosexual relations of the two figures.



More unusual perceptions resulting from intense anxiety are sometimes given for the "tree" on the right and the "bush" on the left. Five such perceptions are found in this sample of fifty responses.

Considerable use is made of the darkness and shading in this picture. Sixty percent of the subjects give clear evidence of using it in their stories. This kind of reality context, the massive black areas and the contrasting use of light and shade, appears to add to the reality threats within the situation. The use made of the reality context often typifies the prevailing mood in the social situation described, as well as providing indications of the kind and intensity of anxiety inherent in the situation, and the subject's ways of dealing with it.

It is common to describe the situation as night or evening, and references to impending rain or storms are fairly frequent.

Picture B<sub>3</sub>. (Presentation 4)

I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

(a) *Characterization* (Persons seen in the picture)

Three persons	47	1 man and 1 woman + 1 woman	22
		1 man and 1 woman + 1 child	15
		1 man and 1 woman + 1 man	6
		1 man and 1 woman + 1 adult	3
		1 man and 1 child + 1 child	1
Two persons	1		
		1 man and 1 woman	
Four persons	1		
		1 man and 1 woman + 2 women	
Group	1		
		1 woman + a group	
	—		
	50		
	—		

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

## (b) *Manifest Relations*

heterosexual rivalry	15
family	11
heterosexual + prohibition	10
heterosexual + observer	7
heterosexual + servant	2
social	2
paternal	1
dramatic	1
conspiratorial	1
	—
	50
	—

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

### (a) *Physical setting ascribed*

Domestic	21	not specified	16
		parents' bedroom	2
		child's bedroom	1
		dining-room	1
		flat	1
Other interiors not specified	18		
Other interiors specified	7	theatre	2
		hotel	1
		church	1
		staircase	1
		hospital	1
		Roman house	1
Others	4	street doorway	3
		porch	1
	—		
	50		
	—		



# NORMATIVE DATA

## (b) Interpretation of, and attention to detail

doorway (centre left)	14
doorway (foreground)	4
dress (two figures centre left)	4
dress (figure lower right)	2
carpets	1

## 3. REALITY CONTEXT: USE OF DARKNESS AND SHADING (specific references)

Diffuse-descriptive	8		
		darkness and night.	4
		shadows—vague	2
		light effects—vague	2
More objectified	13		
		dress, detailed	6
		specified light-effects	3
		shadows (of figures)	3
		carpet	1
Symbolic	9		
		good and evil	4
		warmth	2
		austerity	2
		conspiracy	1
Total references	30	(made by 38 percent of the subjects)	

Three persons are commonly seen in this picture: the two figures together on the left centre are generally seen as man and woman, and the figure on the right foreground as a woman or child. In eight instances persons other than those actually seen in the picture are introduced into the story.

Variations on themes of heterosexual rivalry predominate; where a child is seen as the third figure, this theme is often expressed in terms of feelings of being excluded from the parental relationship or in terms of curiosity about the parents' behaviour.

Differences and similarities of treatment as compared with the story to the preceding card, C<sub>3</sub>, also a three-person situation, should be examined.

There is a great deal of variation in the physical setting ascribed

to this picture, though, in general, elaborations on the reality content are much less frequent than for B1 and B2. The reality context appears to intensify the effect of the definite, somewhat sharp presentation of the content of the picture, adding to the threats and anxieties which may be a part of the object relations situation put upon the picture.

Apart from the doorway in the centre left, the picture offers little opportunity for the use of detail.

The number of specific references to the reality context do not necessarily represent its effect upon the subject in dealing with the object relations situation put upon the picture. The somewhat fewer references, as compared with B1 and B2, may result, in part, from the lack of detail upon which the subject may distribute his conflicting feelings as a part of defensive effort. Some attempts to objectify such feelings may be seen in the attention to the figures in terms of dress, and, less frequently, their faces. In the specific references above, the trend appears to be towards the gloomy and sinister connotations. Only about 40 percent of subjects give clear indications of the use of the reality context.

Picture BG. (Presentation 10)

#### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

##### (a) *Characterization* (Persons seen in the picture)

A group + 1 person 48

adult group + 1 man	15
child group + 1 child	12
adult group + 1 woman	7
adult with child group + 1 child	6
adult group + 1 child	3
child group + 1 man	3
group of statues + 1 man	1
group of adults + 1 statue	1

Others

2

group of boys	1
spirits	1

50



# NORMATIVE DATA

## (b) *Manifest Relations*

Rejection or estrangement	15
sight-seeing	7
family	5
school—social or competitive	5
ritual sacrifice	3
dramatic	3
criminal	2
military	2
pedagogical	2
social	2
others specified	3
not specified	1
	—
	50
	—

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

### (a) *Physical setting ascribed*

Ancient building	20	ruins	12
		Greek temple	6
		monastery	2
School building	8		
Others specified	12		
		stage or film set	3
		eastern street	3
		seaside	3
		desert place	1
		a bridge	1
		windows of house	1
Archways, unspecified	4		
Unspecified	6		
	—		
	50		
	—		

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

## (b) Interpretation of, and attention to detail

main archway	11
pathway, roadway, etc.	10
ruined walls	6
walls, sea walls, etc.	4
pier	2
bridge	1
aqueduct	1
arcade	1

## 3. REALITY CONTEXT: USE OF DARKNESS AND SHADING (specific references)

Diffuse-descriptive	16	bright sunlight	7
		sun and shadows	4
		dawn lights	3
		dusk	1
		twilight	1
More objectified	2	specific light effects	2
Symbolic	3	unreality	1
		limelight	1
		aggression	1
Total references	21	(made by 38 percent of the subjects)	

The figures in this picture are commonly seen as a group, with one other person separated or in some other special relation to the group. In nine instances other persons are introduced into the stories. Characterization of the group and of this individual varies considerably. In more than half the stories the manifest problem has to do with rejection, loneliness, inadequacy, and the like; in a smaller proportion of these cases the emphasis is upon giving help and comfort to the individual concerned.

An ancient building or ruin is the most frequent overall interpretation of the reality content. Where this is ascribed—often it is a classical setting—intellectual pursuits are commonly used



# NORMATIVE DATA

to describe the manifest social relations. This may be a part of the defensive system against anxieties about separation or rejection. There is comparatively little detail in the picture, and the presentation is generally sharp and austere.

The use of the darkness, light, and shade in the picture is again closely bound up with the interpretation of the somewhat austere reality content. The trend towards the greater use of the light and dark contrasts, usually with some measure of diffusion, probably typifies the kind of anxiety which the picture as a whole evokes. Intellectual defences are shown more in the use of the reality content than in the specific use of the darkness and shading.

Approximately 40 percent of the subjects indicate that they use the darkness and shading in the picture. Few subjects make more than one reference to it.

## Picture C1. (Presentation 12)

### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

#### (a) *Characterization* (Persons seen in the picture)

One person	45	1 man	20
		1 woman	18
		1 adult	5
		1 ghost	1
		gorilla	1
Two persons	1	man and woman (seen in the window)	
None seen	4	(tree in window 1)	
	—		
	50		
	—		

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

## (b) *Manifest Relations*

marital	16
alone	10
maternal/paternal	8
social	5
sibling	2
criminal	2 <sup>1</sup>
work	2
supernatural	1
dramatic	1
conspiratorial	1
not specified	2
	—
	50
	—

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

### (a) *Physical setting ascribed*

Kitchen	28		
		detailed	24
		not detailed	4
Country cottage	14		
Domestic unspecified	5		
Others specified	3		
		artist's room	1
		log cabin	1
		country pub	1
	—		
	50		
	—		

### (b) *Interpretation of, and attention to detail*

7 subjects used 6-9 details
22 subjects used 3-5 details
19 subjects used 1-2 details
2 subjects used no detail
—
50
—



# NORMATIVE DATA

towel or dish cloth	25
table (laid for meal)	22
flowers or flower vase	19
window	18
chair	16
sink	14

## (i) *Detail on table (additional)*

meal or remains of	9
jug	5
cup or glass	4
serviette	3
(sugar) bowl	2
plate	2
spoon	1
table cloth	1

## (ii) *Detail on right wall (additional)*

tap	3
mirror	3
shopping basket	3
draining board	1
table top over table	1
lettuce shaker	1
wall plate	1
bottle in wicker basket	1

## (iii) *Circular object, left centre*

air ring	1
old tray	1
lavatory seat	1

## (iv) *Other detail used*

beams	2
curtains under sink	2
window seat	1
floor (unswept)	1
curtains	1
empty shelves	1

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

## 3. REALITY CONTEXT: USE OF COLOUR:

(specific references)

Symbolizing warmth, cheerfulness, friendliness	12
Morning sunlight	6
Emphasizing cleanliness	5
Poverty or coldness	2
Indicating modern trends (e.g. on towel)	2
Alien factor (the red)	1
	— (made by 32 per-
Total references	28 cent of the sub-
	— jects).

The figure in the window is commonly seen in responses to this picture; it is seen equally often as man or woman. The manifest themes vary considerably, as do the social relation situations put upon the picture. A common underlying theme concerns cleanliness, tidiness and the preoccupations with control, by the side of gratification of dependent needs for comfort, warmth, affection and food.

It is common for other persons to be introduced into the story; in the fifty stories analysed there were forty-one such introductions, mainly made up of wives, husbands, children or other members of family.

The setting is usually given as a kitchen, quite often a country cottage or the like. In many respects it is described as warm and friendly.

The considerable amount of detail in the picture is much used by the subjects. Some of these details, which are listed first in the above table, may be classified as "popular" detail and they are rarely misperceived. The kind of attention given to them often reveals something of the subject's concern with food or cleanliness, or conflicting feelings about these two activities.

Many of the other details which are used less frequently are presented with sufficiently indefinite form for different interpretations to be given them. The choice of interpretation for the individual details, as well as particular attention to parts of the room, or attention to details which have particular use or function,



# NORMATIVE DATA

provide information about the object relations dealt with in the situation, in terms of need, anxiety, and method of defence.

Although there are only twenty-eight specific references to the reality context, these suggest that it contributes a general atmosphere of warmth and friendliness as a commonly recognized feature of the presentation. Frequent references to the towel, either early in the story, or somewhat out of context in the story, suggest that the bright red on it focuses attention and represents some aspect of the object relation situation which needs particular attention. It is often linked with comments on cleanliness, thereby suggesting concern about control of aggressive feelings.

Throughout the colour series, the artist's use of the colour has been to intensify feeling relating to the object relations presented in the particular situation portrayed.

## Picture C2. (Presentation 11)

### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

#### (a) *Characterization* (Persons seen in the picture)

Two persons	41		
		1 man and 1 woman	16
		1 woman and 1 child	12
		1 man and 1 child	4
		1 adult and 1 child	2
		2 adults	3
		2 men	3
		2 women	1
One person	7		
		1 woman	5
		1 man	2
Three persons	2		
		2 women and 1 man	2
	—		
	50		
	—		

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

## (b) *Manifest Relations*

maternal or paternal	20
marital	9
alone	6
criminal aggressive	4
social service	3
marital + rival	2
medical	2
hosts and guests	2
others specified	2
	—
	50
	—

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

### (a) *Physical setting ascribed*

bedroom	44	(child's room 16)
domestic (unspecified)	3	
guest house	2	
hospital room	1	
	—	
	50	
	—	

### (b) *Interpretation of, and attention to detail*

7 subjects use 3-5 details  
 31 subjects use 1-2 details  
 12 subjects use no detail

bed	32	bed only	19
		brass bedstead	9
		bedclothes	4

doorway	14	(3 references to size)
picture or photos	8	
chest or washstand	6	
Landing and stairs	3	
clothing (of figure standing)	3	
curtains	2	



# NORMATIVE DATA

## 3. REALITY CONTEXT: USE OF COLOUR (specific references)

Descriptive—definite	12	
(brass bedstead 9)		
(red picture frame 3)		
Fire and reflections of fire	8	
Descriptive—vague (light effects)	6	
Warmth and pleasantness	5	
Associated with danger or illness	4	
Direct expression of dislike of colour	4	
Desolation or poverty	2	
Total references	—	(made by 48 percent of the subjects)

This picture is commonly taken to represent a two-person situation. The figure in the right foreground is seen equally often as man or woman. The figure in the bed is seen more often as a woman or child. Other persons introduced into the stories number eighteen in this sample of fifty cases.

The manifest social relations chosen are various, but marital relations or parent-child relations predominate. The more common manifest themes have to do with illness, child care, and the loss of a loved person.

As with most of the silhouettes in the series, the direction of movement ascribed to the figure varies: "looking in", "going in", "coming out", are given equally often.

The physical setting ascribed is usually a bedroom in a house or private apartments. Elaborations are not very frequent.

Particular attention is often given to the bed. The colour on the framework receives a good deal of mention. It may be taken to be a brass bedstead, which circumstance is fitted into the story, or on occasion the colour is mentioned as a puzzling feature.

There are few other details which might be used in this picture. Attention to the "picture" or "chest" often indicates a retreat from anxiety inherent in the object relationship being dealt with, or a putting out upon these objects of sinister aspects of this relationship.

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

There are many more specific references to the reality context in responses to this picture as compared with C1. On the whole the trend suggested by these references is towards unpleasant feelings. Experience with the test also suggests that the situation is in general taken to be a depressive one. The effectiveness of control, and ways of controlling affect, are often indicated in the subject's use of the colours.

The particular interpretation of colour chosen by subjects may represent, quite strikingly, the quality of object relations revealed in the story. For example, a subject using the red glow to signify the room being on fire described a severe beating by her mother in another part of the story; in another story, colour signifying an air of desolation fits with the main topic, the loss of a parent.

## Picture C3. (Presentation 3)

### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

#### (a) *Characterization* (Persons seen in the picture)

Three persons	48	2 men and 1 woman	29
		3 men	12
		1 man and 2 women	3
		1 man, 1 woman and 1 adult	2
		1 man and 2 adults	1
		1 man, 1 woman and 1 symbolic figure	1
Two persons	1	1 man and 1 woman	
Four persons	1	2 men and 2 women	



# NORMATIVE DATA

## (b) *Manifest Relations*

family	20
marital-social	14
social	9
commercial	2
medical	2
sibling	1
pedagogical	1
conspiratorial	1
	—
	50
	—

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

### (a) *The physical setting ascribed*

Domestic	47	unspecified	43
		farmhouse	2
		suburban house	1
		home library	1
Others specified	3	restaurant	1
		hostelry	1
		broadcasting station	1
	—		
	50		
	—		

### (b) *Interpretation of, and attention to detail*

- 4 subjects use 6-10 details
- 20 subjects use 3-5 details
- 18 subjects use 1-2 details
- 8 subjects use no detail

mantelpiece	20
fire or fireplace	14
table lamp (centre back)	10
bookshelves or books	9
chair (lower right)	8
two chairs	4
pipe (figure lower left)	4
	190

# • AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

## Detail on mantelpiece—additional

### (i) The red object

17

red lamp	7
lamp	6
red lamp shade	1
ruby lamp	1
red gaslight	1
coloured balloon	1

### (ii) Dome shaped object on the right

17

clock	4
picture	3
mirror	2
ornament	2
glass case	2
stuffed bird	2
bird cage	1
jewel box	1

### (iii) Detail on table—additional

coffee	8
tea	7
cup	6
coffee-pot	2
wine	1
dainty cloth	1
ornament	1

## 3. REALITY CONTEXT: USE OF COLOUR (specific references)

The firelight or fire

(5 suggesting comfort or cheerfulness) 16

Red suggesting comfort, cheerfulness, etc. 13

Description of object (the red globe) 11

Symbolizing sinister forces 3

Colour mentioned as incongruous 2

Direct expression of liking for colour 1

Total references

— (made by 60  
percent of the  
subjects)



Three persons are generally seen in this picture. It is common to see the two seated figures as an older man or woman, the one on the right being more often taken as the woman, and the centre figure as a man. In designing the picture the intention was to leave the possibility of seeing the centre figure as a woman. Experience has shown that this occurs only rarely—twice in the present sample. To see the figures as three men, usually in a social, friendly situation is fairly common; this characterization is given about once in every five of these fifty cases. Two very unusual perceptions of the centre figure occur in this sample; in one story it is given as a man or woman kissing and in another as a part of the fireplace. Other persons introduced into stories number only ten in responses to this card.

Common themes have to do with dependence-independence conflicts together with Oedipal rivalries. Other treatments of the situation are often seen to represent ways of avoiding these conflicts in an emotionally charged situation.

The physical setting is usually a domestic interior or a substitute for this. There is very considerable use made of the detail in the picture. Of the larger and less controvertible details listed first above, most attention is given to the mantelpiece and the fire (-place). Attention to these areas may be related to conflicting feelings intensified by the use of the colour, e.g. the warm red glow of the fire and the bright red object on the mantelpiece.

Of the more ambiguous details this red object on the mantelpiece appears to be something which requires attention but which is difficult to fit into the situation, which in many other respects is a warm, cheerful and safe situation. It may be that some of the anxiety about this alien object is displaced upon the dome-shaped object on the mantelpiece, which is variously interpreted. As an alternative area of concern the centre table with its detail may represent food, hospitality and the more friendly aspects of the object relation situation.

Use of the reality content may be seen to fit the tension system put upon the object relation situation here presented. The details chosen, and the way in which they are seen or used, represent aspects of the object relations in terms of need, feared consequence or method of solution. More than one of these phases of the

dynamic process of dealing with the situation may be contained within the particular use of the detail made by the subject.

The specific references to use of colour in responses to this picture supports the view that it is commonly regarded as a warm, comfortable situation. In so far as the colour stimulus invites or challenges emotional involvement in the object relation situation presented it evokes ambivalent feelings, aggression by the side of love, warmth and dependence. The firelight and red reflection in the background are often used to express this conflict of feeling. The bright colour on the globe on the mantelpiece is often mentioned, but rarely integrated into the story content. In some instances it appears to represent an aspect of the object relations which needs to be controlled, by denial, rationalization and other defensive measures; it is probably felt to represent too crudely potentially destructive aspects of the unconscious phantasy put upon the situation.

*Picture CG.* (Presentation 7)

I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

(a) *Characterization* (Persons seen in the picture)

One person and group 36

1 man and group	25
1 woman and group	1
1 man and group (group differentiated)	10

One person only 9

(top centre shadow 8)

(figure lower right 1)

1 man	8
1 woman	1

Group of persons 5

(top centre shadow not  
used as person)

—  
50  
—



# NORMATIVE DATA

## (b) *Manifest Relations*

Political or economical	26
(relation with authority)	
tragic (accident, death)	5
individual pleasures	5
criminal, violent	4
individual effort	4
rejection (by group)	2
social	2
paternal	1
speciator (sport)	1
	—
	50
	—

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

### (a) *Physical setting ascribed*

Flight of steps	32		
		outside large building	19
		unspecified	8
		leading to factory	4
		in a theatre	1
Exterior—level plain	7		
		ploughed field	2
		courtyard	2
		park or orchard	2
		sports stadium	1
Interior of building	5		
		a large room	4
		factory furnace	1
Sea or river	2		
A roof	2		
		garage roof	1
		greenhouse roof	1
A boat	1		
Not specified	1		
	—		
	50		
	—		

# AN OUT-PATIENT CLINIC SAMPLE

## (b) Interpretation of, and attention to detail

### (i) The Steps

flight of steps	32	
marble stairs	2	
ploughed field	2	
beams of a roof	2	
flooring	2	
waves	2	
platform	1	
fallen gate	1	
glass roof	1	
running track	1	
roof	1	
factory furnace	}	1
revolving steel bars		
planks		1
breakwater		1
		<hr/>
		50

### (ii) "Balustrade," bottom left corner

balustrade	5
stone bench	2
bridge handrail	1
a seat	1

### (iii) Group of figures, lower right corner

unusual interpretations:	
shrubs or trees	6
a fire	2
a tarpaulin	1

### (iv) Shadow of figure, top left

unusual interpretations:	
aeroplane	1
sinister abstract force	1
dummy figure falling	1
crushed fruit	1



# NORMATIVE DATA

## 2. REALITY CONTEXT: USE OF COLOUR (specific references)

### (i) Colour on the "steps"

stone	5
bright sunshine	5
light symbolizing warmth	3
marble	2
sinister force	2
water	2
sky and cloud	2
glass	1
furnace	1

### (ii) Colour on group lower right

fire	2
warmth and comfort	2
"life"	1

total references

— (made by 34 per-  
28 cent of subjects)

The figures in this picture are commonly seen as a group in the foreground with one person (or the shadow of a person) above or at some distance. The single figure is usually a man, very rarely a woman, and it is frequently a figure of authority. Apart from the group and the single figure (or shadow), other persons introduced into stories number only ten in the fifty cases considered.

The manifest relations between the group and the figure are commonly described in terms of dissatisfaction by the group with the political or economic power of the authority figure. There are a great many variations on this theme.

Expression of overt aggression, or threat of violent aggression is very common in the stories. It is recorded in thirty-five of the fifty stories here analysed, either in such themes as described above or in stories dealing with accidents, death or criminal activities.

The physical setting was intended as a flight of steps, and in thirty-two out of fifty stories in this sample it is seen as such.

Alternative interpretations, examples of which are given above, may be taken as misperceptions. Many subjects show a spontaneous recovery after giving an unusual interpretation, others

express puzzlement when first presented with the picture and are able to suspend judgement long enough to give the more popular perception. Inquiry at the end of the test is often valuable. This picture is one of the most difficult in the series for many subjects; it appears to represent a particularly strong emotional challenge which is due in the main to the way in which the object relation situation is presented; the vagueness of the authority figure, its position above the group, the distance between the figure and the group, the activity, often seen as violent, of part of the group, and the intensity of the white colour on the "steps", all appear to contribute to the strength of the stimulus, as revealed by direct references within the stories.

There are few details in the physical setting. The main details, the "steps" and the "balustrade" are variously interpreted; in the case of the former many of the interpretations are unusual, and in different ways reflect the subject's attempts to deal with particularly strong tensions.

Examples of unusual perceptions of the group or the single figure are given in iii and iv on page 95.

There are the same number of specific references to use of colour as for C<sub>1</sub>, but fewer than for C<sub>2</sub> and C<sub>3</sub>. The use of colour in this card is in many instances more doubtful, for example, in the descriptive use as applied to stone, marble, water, sky and cloud, glass, which represent twelve out of the twenty-eight references. Texture and light effects may be included in these references which may represent attempts to objectify or otherwise deal with anxieties stirred by the very intense colour stimulus.

Clinical experiences suggest that the colour on the steps does add to the emotional charge of the situation, but it is uncertain to what extent and in what way. The extent of the influence of the colour in so far as it may affect the tension system, either in its particular phases of need, anxiety or defence, or in degree or quality of tension may not be reflected in the specific references made by the subject.



# B. A RESEARCH SAMPLE: 40 ADOLESCENT GIRLS

The following summary of normative data is taken from stories given by forty normal adolescent girls, aged between fourteen and nineteen, who attended secondary modern or technical schools. These girls were given the test to provide a control sample of responses, for comparison with the stories of fifty delinquent girls, in a research by O'Kelly (1955) (1955a) (1955b). In this research O'Kelly uses the Object Relations Technique to explore some of the effects of early separation from parents on the kind and quality of relations with people, at unconscious as well as at a more conscious level, shown by adolescent delinquent girls. Some general comparison between the two groups are made in the comments added to the present normative data. More detailed information on the stories produced by the two groups and a detailed comparison of their responses are given in the reports on this research.

The data given below are arranged, as far as possible, under the headings used for the out-patient clinic sample in the previous pages.

## Picture A1. (Presentation 1)

### (a) Characterization

#### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

(i) The figures seen:	The central figure	man	39
		woman	1
	The secondary figure (16)	man	4
		woman	12
		none	24
	Groups seen (14)	men	4
		women	1
		mixed	9
		none	26

One figure is seen by 16 subjects, 2 figures by 8 subjects and 3 or more by 16 subjects.

(ii) Figures invented:	male	5
	female	5
	mixed	6
	none	24

## ADOLESCENT GIRLS

### (b) *The main roles or relationships portrayed*

The central figure is seen as:	a troubled man	24
	a man admiring a fountain, etc.	9
	a good father or leader	6
	in an unspecified role	1

Where the man is troubled he is usually mourning, repentant or seeking solitude to think out his problems. He is commonly portrayed as mourning for his wife, or worried about her illness, or reformed by a good woman.

Women are seen or invented as secondary figures in twenty cases, and for the most part are used to express reparative needs. The introduction of the reparative woman in this way appears to be characteristic of responses of normal subjects; it occurs far less frequently in the stories of the delinquent group.

### 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

#### *The use of the "arch".*

The light and shade is frequently used in giving meaning to this part of the picture.

A beautiful natural object (fountain, waterfall, etc.)	17
A heavenly light (vision, light over church door, etc.)	21
Not mentioned	2

It appears to be a normal use of this area of the card, to combine the form and light effects to signify an agent that is exalting or redeeming, or in some way dispelling the darkness.

### 3. THE REALITY CONTEXT

#### *The use of the shading and shadows.*

darkness	10
fog or mist	6
not mentioned	24

The use of the shading as fog or mist is found much more frequently in stories by adolescent delinquent girls.



# NORMATIVE DATA

Picture A2. (Presentation 2)

## 1. THE HUMAN CONTENT

### (a) Characterization

(i) The figures seen:	two lovers	22	
	other heterosexual	7	
	two women	7	
	two men	4	
(ii) The figures invented:	male	6	
	female	2	
	both	4	
	none	28	

### (b) The main roles and relationships portrayed

The relationship between the two figures is seen as one of:

contentment	22	4
resolved anxiety	6	
unresolved anxiety	6	
sorrowful parting	2	
(others)		

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

The setting ascribed: The shading is often used, though its use is not always made explicit, in describing the setting for the story situation.

countryside	11	3
waterside	8	
interior, a room	8	
theatre	5	
street	5	
not specified		

## 3. THE REALITY CONTEXT

Darkness is commented upon in only eleven cases where it is attributed to night time, rain, mist or fog. As in A1 the use of the shading as fog or mist appears in the more disturbed records. It occurs also more frequently in stories of the delinquent girls.

## ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Picture A<sub>3</sub>. (Presentation 8)

### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

#### (a) *Characterization*

(i) The figures seen:	three men	30
	two men and a woman	7
	two women and a man	2
	three women	1
(ii) Figures invented:	male	10
	female	4
	mixed	3
	none	23

Figures are invented usually where the theme is sinister, and it is more characteristic of the delinquent groups to introduce groups of criminals, sadistic figures and the like.

#### (b) *The main roles or relationships portrayed*

friendly	16
hostile	17
neutral	7

Where the relation is friendly it is usually seen as a paternal one, the separate figure being a younger person. In four cases the figures closer together are seen as mother and father.

In twelve instances the separate figure is hostile to the couple and in seven of these he is spying on them. In five cases the two persons closer together are quarrelling and the separate figure attempts to reconcile them.

Friendly relations are rarely portrayed by the delinquent subjects, who tend to give more stories concerned with spying, trickery and violence.

### 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

The setting ascribed is as follows:

a street	21
countryside	10
the interior of a house	5
a cave	1
no reference	3



## NORMATIVE DATA

### 3. THE REALITY CONTEXT

Fog is perceived in five cases and there are other references to the darkness in seven cases. Fog, smoke or night are seen more frequently by delinquent girls.

*Picture AG.* (Presentation 5)

#### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

##### (a) *Characterization*

(i) The figures seen	male group	10
	female group	3
	mixed group	24
	a solitary figure	3

Individuals are described in the groups in twenty-nine cases; they are seen as men in ten, women in five, and mixed in fourteen instances.

(ii) Figures invented:	male	8
	female	5
	mixed	5
	none	22

##### (b) *The main roles or relationships portrayed*

troubled, unhappy	26
happy	14

There are references to death or injury in twenty-one instances, in twelve to men, in five to women, and in four to unspecified persons. Such references are much more frequent in the delinquent groups, where they are made by almost 80 percent of the subjects.

#### 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

The scene is described as:

countryside	12
a graveyard	7
a church	7
the sea	5
a street	3
other	6

# ADOLESCENT GIRLS

## 3. THE REALITY CONTEXT

There are twenty-three references to the use of the shading; storms, snow and night are the most common interpretations.

### Picture B1. (Presentation 6)

#### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

##### (a) *Characterization*

(i) The figures seen:	male	23
	female	16
	unspecified	1
(ii) Figures invented: (In the bed)	female	11
	male	8
	none	21
(Others invented)	male	7
	female	5
	mixed	11
	none	17

Figures are invented, either in the bed or otherwise, by all but four of the forty subjects.

##### (b) *The main roles or relationships portrayed*

The relation between the seen figure and the invented figure(s) is as follows:

parental	27
conjugal	6
criminal (murder or burglary)	3

In the delinquent group the parental relation is given less frequently, and where it occurs it tends to be a punitive one. The delinquent subjects commonly see the central figure as a sadistic man creeping upstairs to rob or murder another man, or to attack his wife.



# NORMATIVE DATA

## 2. 3. THE REALITY CONTENT AND REALITY CONTEXT

The setting is always seen as a bedroom in a house or in a boarding house. The situation is usually taken as bedtime or in the night. The room is seen as bare or lacking in comfort in six instances; in five cases there are references to tidiness.

Explicit reference is made to the darkness of the room and the light outside in eleven cases.

### Picture B2. (Presentation 9)

#### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

##### (a) *Characterization*

(i) The figures seen:	lovers	32
	other heterosexual	4
	two women	2
	two men	1
	unspecified	1
(ii) Figures invented:	male	6
	female	4
	mixed	10
	none	20

Invented figures in stories by these normal adolescent girls are usually parents who oppose the romance but who later relent.

A similar pattern is found among the stories given by delinquents, but with them the parental persecution is imagined as more severe and it is less frequently resolved, or resolved only through death or injury. Death phantasies in response to this card appear to be characteristic only of the abnormal subjects.

##### (b) *The main roles or relationships portrayed*

The relationship imagined, as reflected in the mood of the story, is happy more often than not.

contented	21
troubled	12
troubled with satisfactory solution	7

## ADOLESCENT GIRLS

### 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

(i) The Tree: there is explicit reference to the tree in 31 cases, and in 8 of these the couple are sheltering under it.

(ii) The House: This is seen as:

the couple's home	9
the home of the girl's parents	14
the home of the man's parents	4
a hotel or place for a party	6
other	4
no reference	3

Delinquent subjects often see the situation as one in which the girl has been locked out of the house by her parents: this response does not occur in the stories of the normal subjects.

### 3. THE REALITY CONTEXT

There is explicit reference to night time in twenty cases. Moonlight is seen three times and a light in the house four times. Rain is seen three times in this group of normal girls, but much more frequently by the delinquent subjects.

*Picture B<sub>3</sub>.* (Presentation 4)

#### 1. THE HUMAN CONTENT

(a) *Characterization*

(i) The figures seen:

the 2 figures in the background:	lovers or married	37
	father and daughter	2
	brother and sister	1
the figure in the foreground:	girl or woman	29
	boy or man	11

(ii) Figures invented:

male	6
female	6
both	5
none	23

Invented characters in stories to this picture tend to be associated with trickery or death.



# NORMATIVE DATA

## (b) *The main roles or relationships portrayed*

The figure in the foreground is seen as:

hostile	24
helpful or benign	14
in other roles	2

The relationship of the figure in the foreground is more commonly a hostile one, e.g. a jealous spying upon the combined parents, the excluded child or the rejected lover. Where the relationship is more benign, the mother is portrayed as blessing her daughter's romance, or the little sister is waiting for the older one.

## 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

The setting is nearly always given as the interior of a house or hotel.

## 3. THE REALITY CONTEXT

There are specific references to night time in twenty-four cases. Shadows are commented upon in eleven cases and bright light in four.

*Picture BG.* (Presentation 10)

### (a) *Characterization*

#### (i) The figures seen:

the separate figure:	male	36
	female	4
the group of figures	male	26
	female	0
	mixed	14

#### (ii) Figures invented:

male	8
female	2
both	3

## ADOLESCENT GIRLS

### (b) *The main roles or relationships portrayed*

The relation between the separate figure and the group is portrayed as:

friendly	17
hostile—with resolution of hostility	11
hostile—without resolution of hostility	9
no specified relation	3

Where the relationship is good, the separate figure may be a good father (or father figure) teaching the children, or he may be a boy who has become interested in some other aspect of the scene portrayed.

Where the distance between the separate figure and the group is attributed to hostility, the fault is more usually seen in the separate figure, who is either excessively shy or who is being justly punished.

Delinquent groups more commonly perceive hostile relations, the fault lying in the group, who wrongly exclude the boy for being socially inferior in some way. A favoured delinquent theme is for the ostracized boy to become the hero through performing some outstanding feat.

### 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

The situation is seen as:

ruins	20
school	4
church	3
seaside	3
other	10

### 3. THE REALITY CONTEXT

There are references to the bright light in fifteen instances and to night time in only one case. The bright light is often seen as bright sunlight, a Mediterranean sunlight, etc., and is thereby connected with the interpretation of the setting as classical ruins.



# NORMATIVE DATA

## Picture C1. (Presentation 12)

### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

#### (a) *Characterization*

(i) The figure seen in the window:	male	29	
	female	11	
(ii) Figures invented:			
inside the house:	female	13	
	male	7	
	mixed	9	
	none		11
others invented:	female	5	
	male	3	
	mixed	6	
	none		26

#### (b) *The main roles or relationships portrayed*

a happy family relation	22	} 28
two happy friends	2	
a happy solitary person	4	} 4
a sad solitary person	4	
spying or burglary	3	
other troubled relations	5	

Spying and burglary are much more commonly introduced by the delinquent subjects.

### 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

The situation is seen as:

a house	14
a waterside cottage or ship's cabin	14
a country cottage	11
a shop	1

The house is said to be poor, desolate or untidy in twelve cases. Reference is made to a meal in thirty-four instances.

## ADOLESCENT GIRLS

### 3. THE REALITY CONTEXT

The scene is more usually set in the early morning, but there are explicit references relating this to the reality context of the picture, e.g. the light, in only four cases. Similarly, although the colour, that of the red in the towel in particular, appears to influence the interpretation, there are no direct references to it in this sample of stories.

#### *Picture C2. (Presentation 11)*

##### 1. THE HUMAN CONTENT

##### (a) *Characterization*

###### (i) The figure seen:

the standing figure:	woman	30
	man	10
the figure in the bed:	man	16
	woman	11
	unspecified	4
	none	9

The figure in the bed is usually seen as ill or dead (twenty-two cases: thirteen male figures, eight female, one unspecified).

###### (ii) The figures invented:

male	12
female	7
both	5
none	26

In eight instances the invented figure is the doctor who has been summoned to the sick person.

##### (b) *The main roles or relationships portrayed*

mother-child	18
wife-husband	9
daughter-father	4
solitary woman	4
men friends	5



## NORMATIVE DATA

Corresponding to the large number of references to sickness and death, there is a great deal of emphasis upon tending, curing and consoling others in the stories. In this connection the introduction of the woman in a reparative role appears to be characteristically a normal response.

### 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

The scene is always perceived as the doorway to a bedroom in a house or a boarding house. The poverty of the room is commented on in seven instances.

### 3. THE REALITY CONTEXT

A direct reference to the colour in the picture is made in thirteen cases, mainly to the light, the brass knobs on the bed, or a fire in the room.

*Picture C<sub>3</sub>. (Presentation 3)*

#### I. THE HUMAN CONTENT

##### (a) *Characterization*

(i) The figures seen:	two men and a woman	25
	two women and a man	10
	three men	5

##### (ii) The figures invented:

male	5
female	4
both	2
none	29

The standing figure is seen as a man in thirty-seven instances and in only three as a woman.

##### (b) *The main roles or relationships portrayed*

The relationship between the figures is usually a parental one:

parents-son	24
parents-daughter	4
mother-son-other woman	4
(others)	8

## ADOLESCENT GIRLS

The general mood expressed in the stories is one of cosy contentment (seventeen cases), conflict, anger or quarrelling (sixteen cases), or resolved conflict (seven cases). The mood is often bound up with the interpretation of the reality content and reality context in the picture. The emphasis appears to be on reality context (colour).

### 2. 3. THE REALITY CONTENT AND REALITY CONTEXT

Reference is made in twenty cases to the firelight, to the red lamp, or to the warmth and brightness of the room. Specific reference to the red object, with feelings of incongruity and a need to invent phantastic or similar explanations for it, is characteristic of the abnormal group, but rare in this sample of normal girls.

*Picture CG. (Presentation 7)*

#### (a) *Characterization*

##### (i) The figures seen:

the shadow on the steps:	male	30
	female	10
the group of figures:	male	10
	female	4
	unspecified	
	figures	26

Separate figures are specified in the group in about half the cases:

male	9
female	6
mixed	3
none	22

##### (ii) Figures invented:

male	7
female	2
mixed	4
none	27



## NORMATIVE DATA

### (b) *The main roles or relationships portrayed*

As expressed in terms of the attitude of the group to the shadow figure :

approval	22
hostility that is resolved	7
hostility that is not resolved	5
some of the group hostile, some defending	4
anxious	2

Where the attitude is one of approval the crowd is cheering or listening intently to a good leader. Whenever the shadow figure is seen as a woman, she is approved, for example, as a queen or a girl sports champion. Where the crowd is seen as hostile it is nearly always a mob revolting against a male leader. In three cases where this hostility is resolved the mob is quelled by the personality of the leader, by his bravery, or through his moral convictions. When the hostility is not resolved, the bad leader is replaced by a good one or the situation is left open. In those cases where the crowd is divided, some members are hostile, others are helpful or defending the leader, as for example, where police are seen holding back an angry mob.

Unresolved hostility by the group, or a divided attitude, are the most common responses of the delinquent subjects; here the hostility of the group is usually ascribed to the badness of the shadow figure.

### 2. THE REALITY CONTENT

The situation is seen as:

steps leading up to a big building	32
a swimming bath or sports ground	8

### 3. THE REALITY CONTEXT

Direct reference to the colour or colour effects is made in eight cases, e.g. as sunshine, white marble, the splendour of the building or the magnificence of the queen's clothes. Experience suggests that the colour adds considerably to the emotional challenge of the human situation presented in the picture.

## ADOLESCENT GIRLS

The following table shows the average number of individual figures (i.e. excluding groups) seen and invented, in response to the series as a whole, by this group of normal adolescent girls:

	Male	Female
Seen	14.6	9.0
Invented	6.2	5.3

Experience suggests that wide deviations from this "norm" are indicative of problems in social adjustment. The subjects in the normal group who show such deviations produce other evidence of abnormality in their responses. Among the delinquent subjects studied, those who were least responsive to treatment showed very great deviations from this pattern. Retest of these subjects showed an approximation to the norm as their social relationships improved.



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